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Volume 35, No. 2 February 2003

Carolina country

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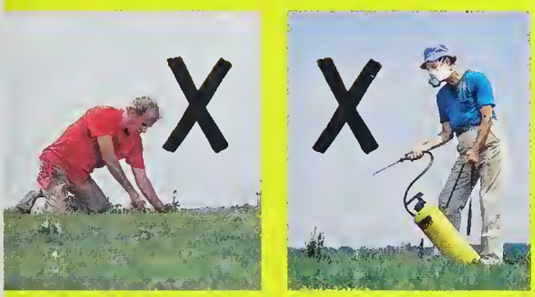

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Country Living

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Our motto: "Be Prepared"

By Randy Brecheisen

Old Man Winter sure did sneak up on us December 4, more than two weeks before the official beginning of winter. The freezing rain that turned to ice paralyzed electrical distribution systems across more than half the state. Nearly one-quarter of the state's electric cooperative members were without power. It was the most damaging ice storm any of us can remember.

But Touchstone Energy cooperatives were prepared for the crisis.

As weather forecasters warned of ice accumulation, co-op crews across the state stood ready to go out to restore electricity that surely would be cut somewhere. Line crews and office staff knew they may need to work through the night December 4 and longer. And that included crews in areas where the storm was not likely to cause much of a problem.

As soon as outages were reported, the co-ops began their familiar routine of dispatching crews to high-priority areas – where repairing damage will restore power to the greatest number of households or businesses. As the line crews worked, operations and office staff scheduled their next move based on outage and damage reports.

In outage situations, co-op service areas that suffer the most damage receive assistance from other co-op crews. This outside help can be from a neighboring co-op that has already restored power to its system, or from co-ops in neighboring states. Offering help in disasters is not only common among cooperatives, but it also makes sense. All cooperative linemen, whether from the mountains, piedmont or coast of North Carolina, know the same way to build and repair the lines, as do linemen from electric cooperatives across the country.

The co-ops' statewide office in Raleigh activated its Storm Center to monitor the weather, issue safety messages and send out press releases to update the public on the status of outages. The co-ops' central supply cooperative, also located in Raleigh, went into crisis-response mode by coordinating the delivery of replacement equipment and directing other co-op line crews to areas where they were needed.

Linemen, dispatchers, operations and communications staff at the co-ops receive continual training in storm-related response. It's part of our job to know how to react to a crisis. Linemen undergo rigorous training at a specially designed educational and training program at Nash Community College, and they continue learning during on-the-job training. Communications staff also regularly practice their response to disasters to fine-tune the system and stay up to date.

Besides the immediate response required in a storm situation, co-ops prepare for these events by anticipating the causes of outages. Throughout the year, co-ops trim trees and otherwise maintain the rights-of-way near power lines and poles. This maintenance is particularly critical in rural areas where many miles of lines are exposed. A major portion of all electric blinks occur when limbs touch power lines or equipment, causing a momentary short circuit. If the limb is not cleared from the line promptly, a complete loss of power can result.

Year-round vigilance, training and maintenance prepare electric cooperatives for storms like the one we saw in December. Preparing for the storm paid off, too, because a week later, almost every member on co-op lines had power.

To help your co-op serve you effectively and to prevent an overload on the electrical system once power is restored, you can do the following:

- Turn off your appliances and lights, except one (so you will know when the power comes back on)
- Turn off your thermostat to your heating and cooling system
- Turn on a porch light so the co-op workers know when your power has been restored.

Working together is the cooperative way, and we appreciate your patience and support during storms.

Randy Brecheisen is president of the cooperatives' statewide power supply organization, North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation. He is also president and CEO of Piedmont Electric Membership Corporation, the cooperative serving more than 29,000 members in Alamance, Caswell, Durham, Granville, Orange and Person counties.

The EMC cares

The other night I was watching the news and listening to what was being said about some electric companies, and it upset me some.

That night the ice came and electricity went out, I was sleeping. When I got up I called Edgecombe-Martin County EMC, and they explained to me what happened. I just want the customers of Edgecombe-Martin to know that we have a good cooperative. I think it was wonderful the way they got right on the job. To some it may have taken longer, but when things like that happen, we learn to have patience, because it takes time for everything in life.

Even after a day was gone by, the EMC still took time out and called to assure me that they were on the job and that they cared. That gave me comfort in knowing that we had a cooperative that cares and stands behind the people they serve.

I am proud to be a member of Edgecombe-Martin Electric. Thank you to everyone there.

Joyce Scott
Whitakers

Let it snow

Thank you for capturing the heart of our state and its people in each of your issues. I built my vacation home in the Banner Elk area over eight years ago, but I live at Wrightsville Beach, so I am privileged to enjoy both ends of our beautiful state. We don't see too much snow down here, so it is always a treat for my children to visit our log cabin and, hopefully, catch some snow and skiing during the winter. Here is my daughter Margaret and one of her friends, Alex, as they pause long enough to "stop and taste the snow."

Kathryn Gresham
Banner Elk
Blue Ridge Electric

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Pen pal found

First I'd like to say thank you for this wonderful article about Jim Bullins and Jim's Kids. Jim is a special person and your writing such an article reaches people like me.

I have an 11-year-old daughter named Heather who was born with Triple X syndrome, autism and brain damage. She also has bipolar disorder. After reading your article, I contacted Jim because my daughter doesn't have many friends. People are either uncomfortable around her or aren't very understanding. He invited us to the December party, but unfortunately we couldn't go because my car didn't work and I'm borrowing her dad's truck. I'm not able to get my car fixed or drive that far because I'm disabled physically and mentally myself. I have a hard time just paying bills and wouldn't be able to afford to go.

Jim said he would have some of the kids become pen pals with Heather. She'll love that.

Deanna Raper
Four Oaks
willowtremor@msn.com

The Saturday Night Jamboree

I read your cover story on Jim's Kids with interest ["Jim's Kids," December 2002]. I would like to make you aware, however, that they are not the only ones to have parties for handicapped kids and adults, as the article says. There is a group in Beaufort County that has been holding a monthly party for the mentally and physically handicapped of all ages in a five-county area for the past 20 or more years. They meet in the Red Men Lodge in Washington with a live band, a monthly theme and refreshments provided by local churches. The group is called the Saturday Night Jamboree, and it, too, relies on tax-deductible donations. The president is a Tideland EMC member named Donna Boyd.

Linda Seale

From a Jamboree regular

I want you all to know that I like going to the Saturday Night Jamboree for the handicaps at the Red Men Lodge in Washington. My Aunt Nancy takes me and a girl named Kay and some time Bruce and Robert to the Saturday Night Jamboree. We sing songs, play games and visit friends. At Halloween we play games and pick out gifts, and at Christmas time Santa gives us a box of candy and a $5 bill. These people are nice people, too, because they help the handicap people if they need anything. We all are just God's family at the Jamboree.

Onie Fran[illegible]
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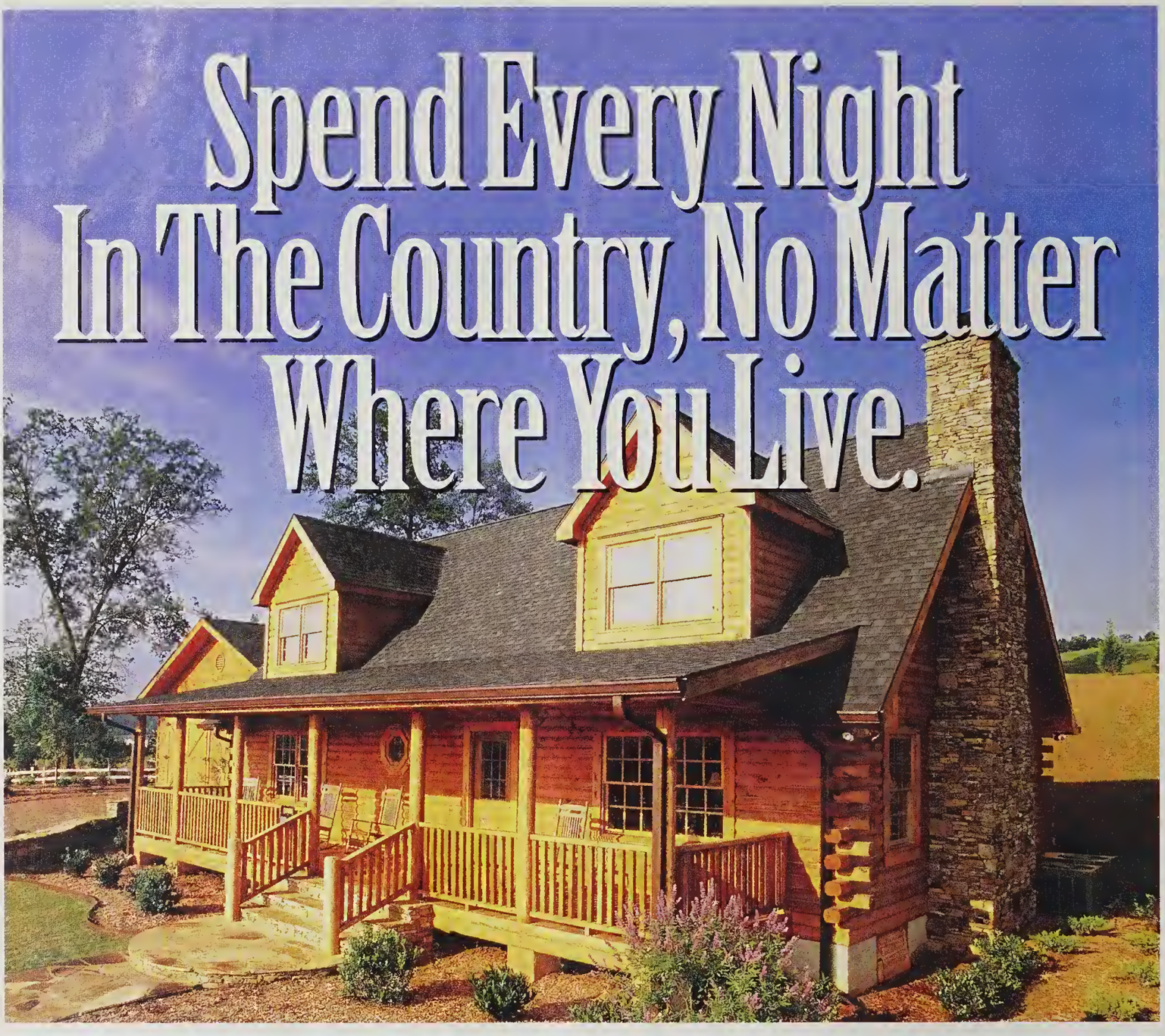

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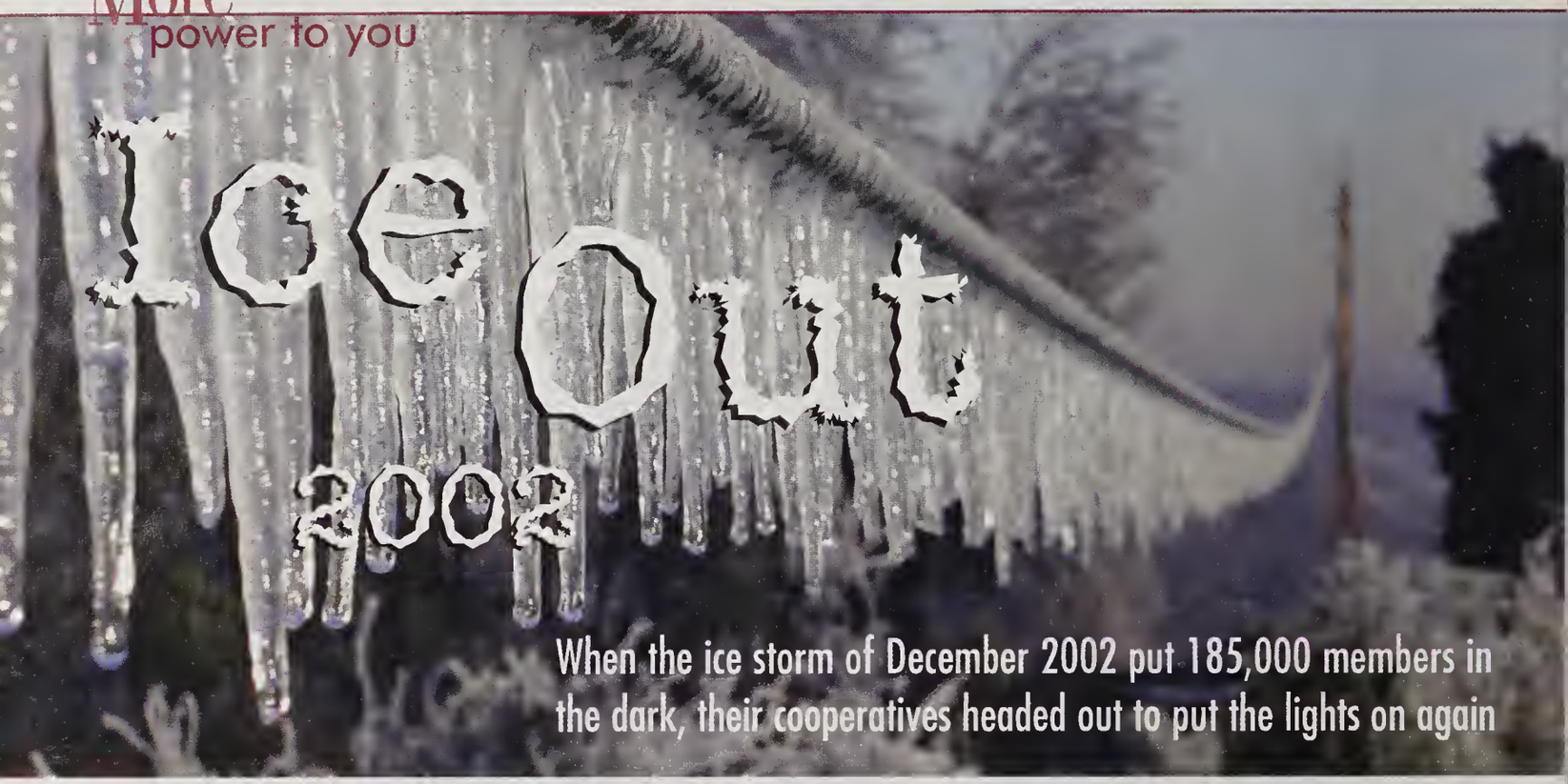


Ice Out 2002

When the ice storm of December 2002 put 185,000 members in the dark, their cooperatives headed out to put the lights on again

Five weeks after what was called the most destructive ice storm in North Carolina history, citizens were still rebuilding damaged property, removing debris and telling survival stories.

The freezing rain and ice accumulation of Dec. 4-5, 2002, paralyzed central North Carolina communities east of I-85 and west of I-95, as well as areas in the Blue Ridge Mountains foothills. More than 1.8 million people were without electric power at one point, and some families didn't see their lights go back on for 10 days.

Gov. Mike Easley sought federal "disaster area" designation for counties most affected by the storm. Designation by the Bush administration would make those areas eligible for recovery help from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Easley also created the Natural Disaster Preparedness Task Force to review recovery efforts and make recommendations for improvements. Additionally, the N.C. Utilities Commission has held a series of meetings around the state to receive public comment regarding utility outages related to the storm.

Counties officially declared disaster areas were Alamance, Alexander, Anson, Burke, Cabarrus, Catawba, Chatham, Cleveland, Davidson, Durham, Franklin, Gaston, Granville, Guilford, Halifax, Harnett, Iredell, Lee, Lincoln, McDowell, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Moore, Nash, Orange, Person, Randolph, Rowan, Rutherford, Stanley, Union, Vance and Wake. Easley also sought disaster declaration for these other counties, though federal no decision had been made as Carolina Country went to press: Caldwell, Davie, Edgecombe, Johnston, Northampton, Polk, Warren, Wayne and Wilson, with Richmond pending.

North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives experienced extensive damage. At the height of power outages, more than 185,000 households and businesses served by cooperatives were without electricity. The cooperatives and their Cooperative Storm Center in Raleigh implemented their emergency response plans as the weather approached. Line crews were dispatched to restore power to areas most in need immediately after outages were reported. Cooperatives that finished their restoration work, as well as those that didn't suffer damage, sent crews to help those still working. Cooperatives from neighboring states also sent crews, and several contractors were hired as well. By the night of Sunday, Dec. 8, the co-ops reported over 93 percent of consumers impacted had seen their lights go back on. Co-op managers said the experiences after such destructive hurricanes as Fran in 1996 and Floyd in 1999 helped line crews, operations and communications staff tend to power restoration efforts as efficiently as possible. Central EMC staff in Sanford, for example, took all measures possible to keep repair crews fresh and on-the-job, including preparing meals that they would take into the field for the linemen.

After co-ops had their own systems up and running, several offered line crew help to other neighboring utilities.

All utilities, including cooperatives, are working to provide state officials with information regarding restoration efforts during and after the storm. As Carolina Country went to press, the cooperatives were preparing their report.

Pretty Scary *Cyana Briles took this photo (above) of ice accumulation on one of EnergyUnited's power lines. This was Thursday morning, Dec. 5, at her uncle's farm. "Five days without makes me appreciate the power when I do have it," she said.*

Members had a role, too

Co-op officials complimented their crews and office staffs for the long days and nights they worked to address outage problems. They also thanked members for their patience and understanding.

The Halifax EMC service area in Halifax and Warren counties was one of the hardest hit, with more than 90 percent of the approximately 11,000 households and businesses without electric power. During their repair work, co-op members

offered food, refreshment and moral support. Crew leader Danny Pendergrass told a Littleton Observer reporter, "Everyone was real supportive. One lady up the road brought us pizza and lasagna. The folks at Eaton Ferry Marina and also Lake Gaston Country Club brought us food. People were stopping and talking to us, bringing coffee and drinks. They were good to us."

Piedmont EMC, the co-op serving some 29,000 accounts in Orange, Durham, Alamance, Granville, Person and Caswell counties, responded to outages affecting nearly 85 percent of its membership. About 400 linemen, many from other co-ops, worked to repair the system while all its office staff provided round-the-clock support services from the Hillsborough headquarters.

Most of the co-ops' distribution systems are located in rural areas where broken limbs and downed trees snapped power lines and damaged equipment in some very hard-to-reach places. A lineman for EnergyUnited, Shay Reed, placed a 4-wheeler in the bed of a co-op pick-up truck to help him reach downed lines and poles in the countryside around Taylorsville in Alexander County. He packed a cooler with his rubber gloves and rubber sleeves, his climbers, splicers and fuses. The 4-wheeler also carried hand line, insulators, bolt cutters and a chainsaw to help him go across the rough, icy terrain.

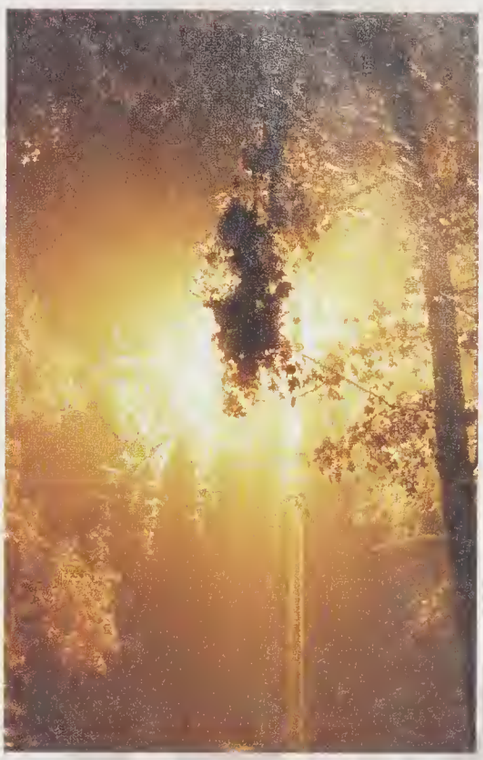
Members were generous in their support for co-op personnel working to get their power back on. A member of Rutherford EMC said that in church after the storm on Sunday, Dec. 8, the pastor said, "Some of us don't have power, and the rest of us have Rutherford EMC."

Randolph Electric Power *Bud Blaylock, a member of Randolph EMC, took this photo (top, right) on Thursday night, Dec. 5. It shows the security light outside his house.*

"I am at the end of a power circuit with REMC," he said. "We last power, thonk God, for only five hours or so. The photo is proof of how committed REMC is to customer service and keeping power to their customers."

"I tried to go to work around 6 a.m. that Thursday morning, all the while dodging downed limbs and trees. I passed by...an REMC scout truck that was two-wheel-drive, who was already out surveying damage to get the linesmen quickly out to the right areas. What a brave soul he was to be out there! Thanks."

We're Here To Get Your Lights On *Henry and Cathy Gales of Sanford, members of Central EMC, sent this photo (middle, right) of a Central line crew at work in the aftermath of the ice.*



Sanford Pit Stop *Electric system repair crews from Pike Electric, contracted by Central EMC, re-fuel in Sanford. In the early stages of restoration work, Central EMC staff scouted the region in search of filling stations that were operating near the location of line crews. Jody Albright took this photo.*

Pretty *Cyana Briles of Jackson Creek, a freelance photographer and member of EnergyUnited, found beauty in the midst of the December ice storm.*

Short Circuit Scene *Chuck Lee, director of marketing for Piedmont EMC, took this photo at 4:45 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 5, in Durham County. Ice has caused a tree limb to come in contact with a live power line, resulting in a short-circuit. "I wish I could have got some video," he said. "The shot is between [illegible] as the breakers operated, and just as another was coming."*

Brunswick EMC values physical fitness technology for middle school students

By Suzanne Shoaf

It is unfortunate but true. Kids and fast food go together, well, like cheeseburgers and French fries. Obesity in children and adolescents is a major threat to their health, and these startling statistics prove it.

- A recent study reported in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition found the rate of overweight 6 to 18-year-olds in the United States nearly doubled between the 1970s and the 1990s.
- The prevalence of obesity among children in the United States increased 100 percent between 1980 and 1994.
- The 1999 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, conducted by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, concludes that about 13 percent of children aged 6 to 11, and 14 percent of adolescents aged 12 to 19, are overweight. In the early 1970s, these numbers were 4 percent of children and 6 percent of adolescents.

Many people attribute the obesity epidemic among America's youth to their food choices and lack of physical activity.

Kem Dudney, of Hallsboro Middle School located in Columbus County, in southeastern North Carolina, decided to enlist her 300 students in a battle against obesity by using technology in their physical education classes.

Dudney calls it "Heart Power." This program, which uses heart rate monitors in physical education classes, teaches students to safely monitor their own heart rate and create their own individual cardiovascular routine.

The goals of the program are to improve cardiovascular fitness levels of all students at Hallsboro Middle School. Providing safe, reliable means of measuring cardiovascular fitness and individualizing physical fitness workouts are among the top priorities of "Heart Power."

A school like Hallsboro Middle needs additional financial resources to make possible the "Heart Power" program, which is not a routine part of the curriculum. Based on the 1990 census statistics, Columbus County ranked 94th of the state's 100 counties in median income. The unemployment rate is approximately 8.9 percent, the fifth highest of the 100 counties.

Kem Dudney's ingenuity was rewarded by a Bright Ideas education grant from Brunswick Electric Membership Corporation, which serves Brunswick, Columbus and parts of Robeson and Bladen counties. The Bright Ideas grant program was founded by Brunswick EMC more than 10 years ago and has since turned into a statewide program in which all 27 of North Carolina's electric cooperatives participate. In 2002, more than $500,000 was given out in grant money across the state, and since the program's inception, more than $3 million has been given out to deserving teachers.

Teacher Kem Dudney demonstrates the heart monitor.

"Research substantiates the fact that learning occurs best when it begins with concrete hands-on experience," said Dudney. "Through the use of technology in physical education class, we educate students in lifestyle choices and discuss consequences of poor, unhealthy choices. Students are learning the positive effects of daily exercise through analysis of their program."

A Hallsboro student work on her fitness program.

Dudney's students also can integrate the data they gather from the heart monitors in other classrooms and subjects. They incorporate math skills by adding miles they have run or walked during their fitness plan. They track how far they could have traveled on their social studies maps. And they record journal entries in creative writing class explaining the fitness activities they have mastered.

"We take a bunch of energetic children (live wires), ground them (teach the most beneficial way to exercise) and turn that energy into knowledge. This knowledge will lead to power to live a healthy lifestyle," said Dudney.

Bright Ideas 2003-2004

Cooperatives will begin accepting applications for Bright Ideas grants in May for projects to be funded in the 2003-2004 school year. Watch for more information in Carolina Country and from your electric cooperative. You can also learn more at *www.ncbrightideas.com*

Suzanne Shoaf, a community relations specialist with the North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation, coordinates the statewide activities of the Bright Ideas grant program.

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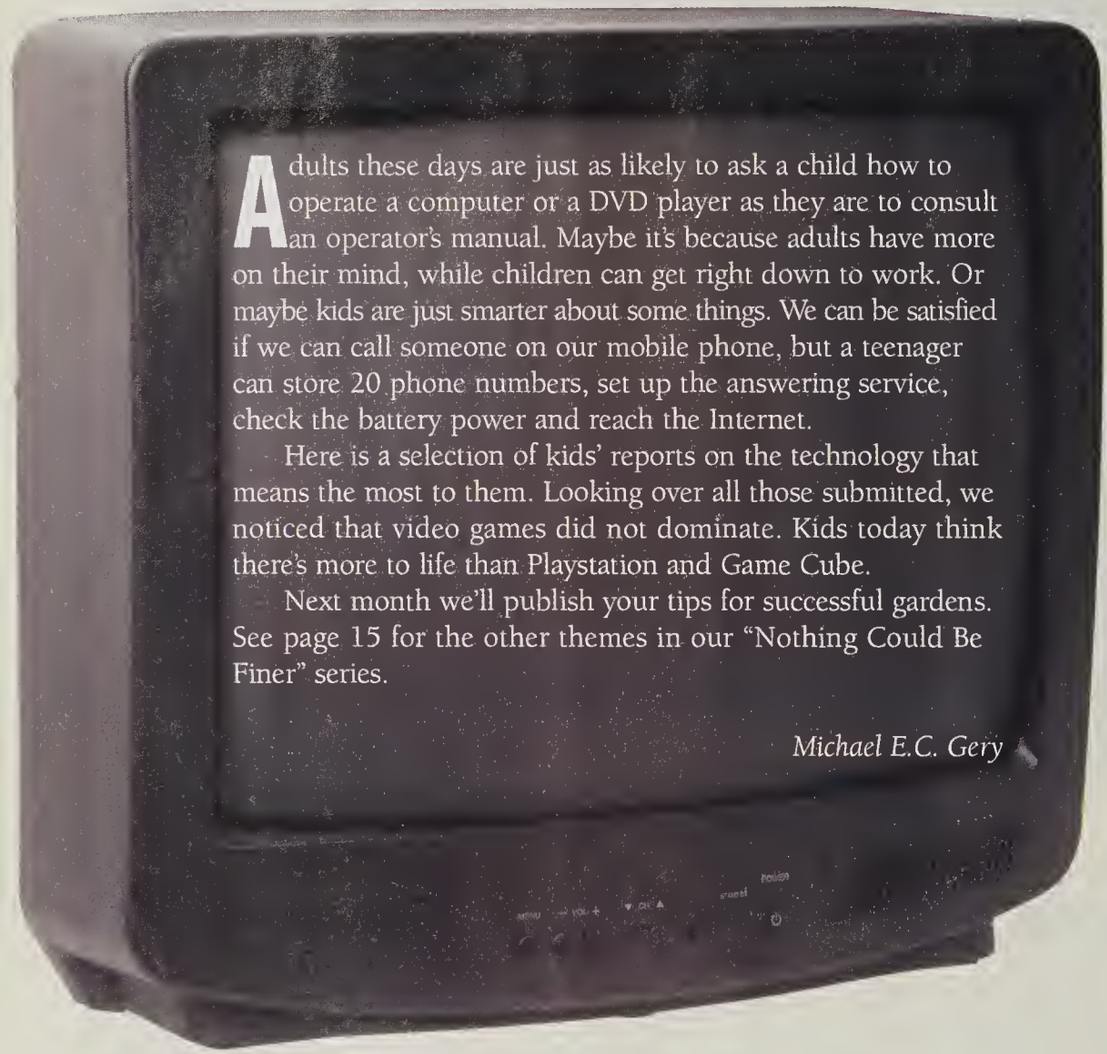
Tuned in and turned on

What today's technology means to young people



Adults these days are just as likely to ask a child how to operate a computer or a DVD player as they are to consult an operator's manual. Maybe it's because adults have more on their mind, while children can get right down to work. Or maybe kids are just smarter about some things. We can be satisfied if we can call someone on our mobile phone, but a teenager can store 20 phone numbers, set up the answering service, check the battery power and reach the Internet.

Here is a selection of kids' reports on the technology that means the most to them. Looking over all those submitted, we noticed that video games did not dominate. Kids today think there's more to life than Playstation and Game Cube.

Next month we'll publish your tips for successful gardens. See page 15 for the other themes in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series.

Michael E.C. Gery

TV: a family's best friend

My favorite technology is the TV, because you can watch regular TV or a movie. Whenever someone wants to watch something else on the big TV, I just go to my room. I can watch my TV, or I can choose to watch a movie, but when I decide to watch TV with my mama, I go to the other TV.

The reason we have so many TVs is because there are five of us. Sometimes my brothers and I watch TV together, but most of the time we argue over what we are going to watch. Then we watch TV as a whole family. I sit with Mama, Aaron sits with Daddy, and Josh stretches out on the floor. This keeps us from fighting, because Mama and Daddy watch what they want.

On TV nights, Mama and Daddy drink coffee and we get hot chocolate and cinnamon buns. These are the best nights, and we all enjoy each other's company. Lord only knows what we would do if TV were not invented.

Jessica Jenkins, 10
Chinquapin
Four County EMC

A PDA keeps my life together

"PDA" is an abbreviation for "personal digital assistant," more commonly known as a "Palm Pilot." Most people think that they are just a little gadget that important business people keep their oh-so-busy schedules in. Little do they know that a Palm Pilot is really a date book, address book, "to do" list, memo pad, mp3 player, picture album, video arcade, graphing calculator, universal remote control, and alarm clock all combined. Some of the newer PDAs even have an Internet connection through satellite reception.

With my palm pilot I can keep track of my homework, my friends' phone numbers, and if I get bored in the waiting room at the doctor's office, I can sneak in a quick game of "Bejeweled." I have all of my electronic devices linked to my PDA so I don't have to have 10 different remote controls for things. I set reminders when important things are due, and my trusty Palm Pilot never fails to advise me about them.

All of this and more is compacted into a tiny device that fits comfortably in my purse, so I never leave home without it.

Nikida Koraly, 15
Cape Carteret
Carteret-Craven Electric

Computers and the Internet keep me in touch

My favorite technology is the computer because of all the different things it can do. You can type something and then e-mail it to somebody near or far. It also provides entertainment like videos and games.

Continued on page 15.

SEND us your best.

Earn $50.

Here ore the themes in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series. Send us your stories and pictures. You don't have to be the best writer. Just tell it from your heart.

April 2003
"Best North Carolina Vacation – Off the Beoten Poth"
Where, why and send pictures.
Deodline: Feb. 15

May 2003
"We Actually Saw a Wild. . . "
Tell us obout whot you saw in the North Carolina wilderness.
Deadline: March 15

June 2003
"The Finest Food in North Carolina"
If you hod to pick one North Corolino speciolty, what would it be and why?
Deodline: April 15

July 2003
"Why I Went Back to School"
What was your most meaningful odult educotion experience?
Deadline: May 15

August 2003
"The Funniest Story I Ever Heord"
True, or not so true.
Deodline: June 15

September 2003
"My Favorite Photo"
Our onnual photo gollery of North Corolina people and places.
Deodline: July 15

October 2003
"Why I Like My Electric Cooperotive"
Is o cooperotive different than other utilities?
Deodline: August 15

November 2003
"The Finest Neighbor I Ever Knew"
Tell us why ond send a photo.
Deadline: Sept. 15

December 2003
"How to Live a Long ond Happy Life"
Do you know on older person who sets a good exomple for staying healthy and happy? Send o photo, too.
Deadline: Oct. 15

The Rules

1. Approximotely 200 words or less.
2. Only one entry per household per month.
3. Photos ore welcome. Digital phatos must be 300 dpi ond octual size.
4. E-mail or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
5. Include your nome, electric co-op, moiling oddress ond phone number.
6. If you wont your entry returned, please include o self-addressed, stamped envelope. (We will not return others.)
7. We pay $50 for eoch submissian published.
8. We will past on our Web site more entries thon we publish, but con't poy for those submissions. (Let us know if you don't ogree to this.)
9. Send to Nothing Finer, Corolino Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616. Or by e-moil: caralino.country@ncemcs.com. Or thraugh the Web site: www.corolinacountry.com

The Internet is the best thing about the computer, because you can find about anything on the Internet. There are games on the Internet that you can download and play. There is also an unlimited supply of information that you can never reach the end of. There is stuff you can buy, such as cards, picnic tables, even houses. It also allows you to keep in touch with your family like I do with my sister who is a junior at Duke University. You can also Instant Message your friends and family, which is like talking to them over the phone it is so quick.

Also, if you write something really good, you can print it if you have a computer.

Thomas Johnson, 11
Hays
Surry-Yadkin EMC

Electricity keeps me wired

My favorite technology is electricity. I have had electricity around all of my life. My dad, on the other hand, who is 78 years old, didn't have electricity when he was younger. Even though there were 33,000-volt lines running right across his property, he didn't get any of it.

Without electricity there wouldn't be computers, radios, televisions, lights, refrigerators or many more appliances.

Just think: Batteries are electricity, and without batteries we wouldn't have flashlights, Game Boys, cameras and a lot more stuff. How would life be without all of the things that use electricity?

Today everything uses electricity, and you can't do anything without it. You would go to bed as soon at it got dark. You would wake up to extremely hot weather without any air conditioners. Life would be hard without electricity. Every time the power goes out during a storm, I am so bored until it comes back. Everything I do involves electricity.

John Henry, 13
Hampstead
Four County Electric

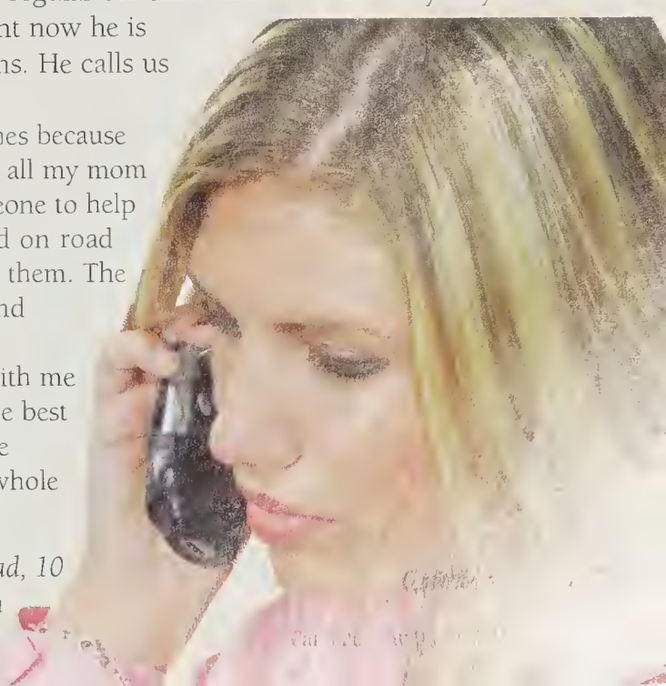
Cell phones are there when you need them

I love cell phones because my dad is in the Army. An international cell phone — and also regular old snail mail — is the only way we can communicate. Right now he is deployed for six months. He calls us though a cell phone.

I also like cell phones because when we had a flat tire, all my mom had to do was call someone to help us. When we are bored on road trips, we play games on them. The cell phone is a great and resourceful invention.

My family agrees with me that the cell phone is the best invention, besides the Internet. (But that is a whole different story.)

Kayla Mead, 10
Stedman
South River Electric



Continued from page 15.

Tractors have made a big difference

We live in a world of computers, electronics and other timesaving gadgets. Technology today focuses on speed and high performance. Our world seems to be getting faster and faster, yet we wonder why we are so tired at the end of each day.

Considering this, my favorite kind of technology would have to be the tractor. If we could look back 100 years, what would we see? Farmers back then worked long hard hours in the fields. Using teams of oxen or horse-drawn plows, they struggled to make a living. With the invention of the tractor, the farmer's workload became lighter. They still worked most of the day, but they had time to visit with neighbors in the evening. In those days entertainment wasn't provided by television or computers, but by family and friends.

The tractor is a very efficient machine that still keeps us in touch with our past. As an added bonus, tractors are fun to drive and ride.

Caitlin Rogers, 12
Canton
Haywood EMC

The window to the world

My name is Ben Presnell, and I am keenly interested in technology.

My favorite technology is the Internet. The Internet enables the user to communicate, conduct research, and be an online consumer. The availability of the Internet has opened pathways for communication and research that never before were imagined.

Internet communication encompasses both e-mail and Instant Messaging services. E-mail allows individuals to send information worldwide instantaneously, without postal fees or delays. Instant Messaging allows one to send messages instantly between two or more people simultaneously.

The Internet is a superb source for conducting research. I myself use the Internet for research on school essays. There are a variety of search engines, such as Google or Lycos, which can be used. These search engines help acquire information, without spending hours searching through various books. I used Google and gained vital information for my recent Presidential Essay.

The Internet also allows us to be online consumers. With the click of a mouse, one can purchase almost any item needed. Online shopping prevents spending hours searching through stores.

The Internet is a window to the world.

Ben Rick Presnell, 13
Boone
Blue Ridge Electric

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Introducing
Carolina Country's page for N.C. students

Over the years, we have discovered that this magazine reaches more than the name on the mailbox. Students thumb through the pages looking for help on school projects, while teachers use the magazine for classroom lessons.

Our new bimonthly "Tar Heel Lessons" page offers something for everyone. The page will feature N.C. history lessons and trivia, current events, puzzles, craft ideas, jokes, educational Web sites and readers letters.

Let us know what you think. Email carolina.country@ncemcs.com or write to Carolina CountryTar Heel Lessons, P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, NC 27611 with your comments and suggestions for future issues.

Not long ago ...

What was the Underground Railroad?

The Underground Railroad was reportedly named in 1833 after a missing slave's owner said he "must have gone off on an underground road." There was no railroad, and just a few underground tunnels. Slaves hid in wagons, barns and cellars and acted as messengers between stations to help free others.

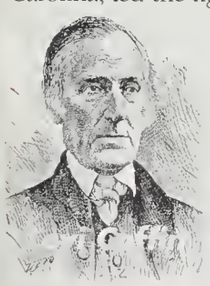
Cleveland, Ohio, was the main crossroads of the Underground Railroad, and the Appalachian Trail a main route from South to North, including western North Carolina. Assisting the slaves to freedom were free blacks, Quakers, black Masons and churches, and others. People who helped free slaves were called abolitionists.

When did the first slaves arrive in America?

The first slaves arrived in the "New World" in 1619 at Jamestown, Virginia. In West Africa, as many as 50 to 60 children were kept in small, windowless holding cells for weeks and months before the transport ships arrived to take them across the Atlantic.

N.C. connection

Some 50,000 North Carolinians moved to Ohio and Indiana years before the Civil War to protest slavery. Quakers, who were one of the largest organized religious groups in North Carolina, led the fight to oppose slavery.



The only N.C. historical marker formally dedicated to the Underground Railroad is in tribute to North Carolina-born Levi Coffin, known as the president of the Underground Railroad. Coffin was a Quaker who acted on his beliefs. With his wife's help, Coffin offered a safe haven in Indiana to thousands of African-Americans along escape routes. The state marker in his honor was erected in 1955 on Friendly Avenue in Greensboro, near his rural birthplace. There is also a privately-sponsored marker for the Underground Railroad at Guilford College.

Mendenhall Plantation in Jamestown displays a restored wagon with a false bottom. It transported hundreds of slaves from North Carolina to Ohio during the Underground Railroad Movement. The plantation, which also features an 1811 house, barn and outbuildings, is open to individuals or to student group tours. Contact (336) 454-3819 for more information or visit www.triadneighbors.com/Main.wsi?group_id=152

The "Conductor"

Araminta Harriet Greene Tubman (1820-1913) devoted her life to fighting slavery, helping slaves and ex-slaves, and championing the rights of women. An incredibly brave woman, Tubman freed hundreds of slaves through the Underground Railroad. She was known as the "Moses of her people."

Now You Know ...

The ice storm that hit North Carolina last December reminded us all how much we use and need electricity for appliances, computers, tools and toys. Consider these facts:

- In 1970, only 33 percent of folks in America owned a color TV or had central heat and air conditioning.
- In 1930, only 50 percent of households had indoor flush toilets. That same year, only 67 percent of households had access to electricity. And in 1900, a mere 3 percent of households had electricity.

Source: Mike Walden, N.C. Cooperative Extension Service

CHECK IT OUT!

"The Underground Railroad in American History"

This book gives a general history of the Underground Railroad, as well as illustrations, maps and stories about some of the conductors. At the library, ask for call number J973.7 Sawyer in childrens collections. By Kem Knapp Sawyer. 1997. Enslow Publishers. 128 pages. $20.95.

Underground Railroad on the Web

http://wsfcs.k12.nc.us/ncafam/1850-00.html
Information and links about the Underground Railroad in North Carolina.

http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/fpn.html
First-person narratives about the American South, from the viewpoint of Southerners. Includes diaries, autobiographies, memoirs, travel accounts, and ex-slave narratives.

FOLLOW THE FLYING GEESE

How a secret code of quilt patterns displayed a map to freedom along the Underground Railroad

By Michael E.C. Gery

In the 1700s and early 1800s, slave traders sought out the most skilled, intelligent and healthy people they could find in West and Central Africa. They hunted down and captured Africans, then held them prisoner before jamming them as cargo onto ships that ferried them across the Atlantic. At the end of their grueling journey, they were sold and forced to work in Caribbean and American homes and farms. Although torn from their communities and stripped of their freedom, these Africans did not lose their humanity. They held on to the traditions of African civilization, culture and religion. They brought their talents. And they never lost their desire to be free human beings.

As soon as they were captured, African slaves devised ways to revolt and escape. History has recorded some successful uprisings, but most attempts to escape bondage failed. As the economy of the southern United States became increasingly dependent on slavery in the late 1700s and early 1800s, slave owners tightened their grip. Northern states would gradually abolish slavery later, but the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 required states to return slaves to their owners.

Laws denied slaves a formal education. Slaves would be severely punished for gathering with one another unless supervised by whites. Even drumming was prohibited, because slaveholders suspected drum beats carried information and signals. Simply communicating amongst themselves required slaves to develop a secret language or code. Singing what became known as "spirituals" was part of that language – a language that conveyed information and ideas by using traditional African symbols and images even when veiled by what seemed to be a Christian devotion or prayer.

The Underground Railroad was a network of free blacks and sympathetic whites that operated to assist fugitive slaves. According to some accounts (including that of Wilbur Siebert, an Underground Railroad historian who published a major study of it in 1893), the name Underground Railroad derives from a statement made by a man closely pursuing a slave escaping from Kentucky. When the escapee suddenly vanished from a riverbank, the pursuer said it seemed the man had "gone off on an underground road." It was most active between about 1830 and 1865, when the Abolitionist movement was gaining strength in the U.S., especially after 1850 when Southern political leaders won a re-enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Laws.

Escaping the plantation was dangerous and scary business. While slaves surely knew more about the surrounding countryside than their masters did, they did not know much more about where they were going. They depended on help from other slaves, free blacks and helpful white families. Runaways covered maybe 10 miles a day on a journey that could last four or five months of passing through wilderness and hostile territory. The Underground Railroad involved a series of "safe houses" and "stations" where fugitives could hide, as well as a map of routes to some northern states and especially to Canada where individual freedom was assured.

Because any escape had to be planned and executed in

©Bruce Clark Photography

secrecy, there was minimal communication within the network. The Underground Railroad relied on secret communication methods that had been developed for generations. Escape required an understanding of the code not only among slaves throughout the South, but also among the loosely connected free blacks who were instrumental in assisting fugitives. In fact, learning about the Underground Railroad, and the many ways slaves tried to escape, is difficult because so much of the planning and running was done in secrecy and in coded language.

Research and the passing down of family stories have revealed many aspects of the secret signaling used to help slaves flee to freedom. These range from the use of open or shut windows and lighted gateposts to signs placed along the routes and secret phrases exchanged between free blacks and runaway slaves.

One of the secret communication systems that has come to light only recently is the Underground Railroad Quilt Code. Historian Jacqueline L. Tobin, along with African American art historian and quilter Raymond G. Dobard, in 1999 published their study of the Quilt Code in their book, "Hidden in Plain View: A Secret Story of Quilts and the Underground Railroad." The study began in 1994, when Jacqueline Tobin met Ozella McDaniel Williams, an African American quilter in Charleston, S.C., who gradually revealed the story as she had learned it from her mother and grandmother.

Much of the language itself has faded away entirely. Even though Ozella McDaniel Williams was the keeper of the code in her part of South Carolina and disclosed it to Jacqueline Tobin (only after Ozella recognized her as "ready" for the story), Tobin and Dobard had to delve into ancient African decorative arts symbolism and the conditions of African American slavery to crack the code's meaning throughout the Underground Railroad.

Secret Signals

This is how the Quilt Code worked as far as we know it:

African American slaves combined common quilt patterns and sewing methods with traditional African symbols and images to make bed quilts that would display messages. The messages themselves were part of a language that held meaning only for people who had somehow learned it from any of a number of teaching methods – in worship services, through storytelling or in secret sessions with elders.

Slaveholding families and white supervisors had no cause to suspect anything unusual about slave women making quilts, either for white families or for themselves. Likewise, it was common practice to hang quilts outdoors during daylight to freshen them in the air, especially during the spring and summer months when most escapes occurred so that slaves could reach Canada before cold weather. The quilts acted as billboards, sending encoded messages to slaves intending to flee as well as to those on the run. Slaves who did not know the code most likely traveled with guides who did.

Most often, the quilts displayed a single design made of several squares of the same pattern. For example, a quilt showing the Monkey Wrench design (also known among quilters as a Square and Compass or Carpenter's Square) signaled slaves to "prepare the tools" they would need to carry on their escape. Slaves seeing the Monkey Wrench quilt hanging in plain view some spring day would know to get ready to leave, and to collect not only the hardware they would need, but also the mental and spiritual tools to fortify them. The pattern also resembled a ship's wheel and in coastal areas could carry the message that a black seaman or boat pilot was prepared to transport slaves.

As Ozella Williams told it, the first message in the Quilt Code was "The monkey wrench turns the wagon wheel toward Canada on a bear's paw trail to the crossroads." Slaves who knew the code would know this phrasing as well as the four symbols within it: the Monkey Wrench, the Wagon Wheel, the Bear's Paw and the Crossroads. And each of the four symbols is a quilt square pattern.

After noticing the Monkey Wrench quilt on display, advising them to prepare for the journey, slaves would then look for the Wagon Wheel quilt hanging somewhere, telling them to "load the wagon" or prepare to board a wagon coming to pick them up or simply to go. The Wagon Wheel is a common quilt pattern and appears in many forms, but always as a wheel.

Seeing a Bear's Paw quilt when setting off or somewhere along the may have told the slaves to follow the trails the bears take in spring and summer – in the South it very likely would have been a route through the Appalachian Mountains. The mountain trails were safer than roads more commonly traveled. Following bear tracks in the woods would not have been especially difficult for people who did not know exactly where they were going. And the animal tracks also could help fugitives find water and food along the way.

As Jacqueline Tobin says, quilts displaying the Code served as road maps on the route to freedom. They flashed visual messages "hidden in plain view." Along the several routes of the Underground Railroad, enslaved blacks in the South and free blacks in the North knew the Code and hung quilts to report local conditions to the runaways who they knew would be traveling in certain seasons. One message was to seek shelter, another to continue to a church, another to take on a disguise. The well-known five-pointed Star quilt pattern told fugitives to follow the North Star. Even the stitching on the reverse side of a quilt contained a secret road map code, indicating, for example, the number of miles between safe houses along the route.

Laura Sneed's Quilts

One way that African Americans learned the Quilt Code was by studying sampler quilts. A woman showing a granddaughter or young people a quilt containing several samples of quilt patterns

Pictured left: Laura Sneed revives the Quilt Code patterns.

probably was not suspected of convening a class for teaching a secret language. She could explain the meaning of each design and the stories behind them.

Today, Laura Sneed is carrying on the tradition of making samplers of the Quilt Code and teaching people how the code helped fugitive slaves. A professional seamstress for many years, Laura Sneed makes the quilts as wall hangings or as bedspreads. Her quilts hang in churches, schools and in other public and private collections.

Mrs. Sneed and her husband, Isaiah, live in Franklin County near the community of Rocky Ford. They are long-time members of the Wake Electric cooperative. Mr. Sneed farmed the homestead for many years and is retired now. They raised a son and three daughters here.

When she was growing up, Laura would watch her mother make quilts for the family. In high school she studied home economics, including sewing. After high school in 1941, she attended Henderson Institute and a vocational program there sponsored by the New Deal's National Youth Administration. She perfected her sewing skills and soon found herself sewing for the Oxford Orphanage. "I learned how to sew fast then," she says.

After she married in 1943, she worked from her home as a seamstress. She was known for her fine dresses and suits. In 1974, she completed nursing training at Vance-Granville Community College and worked as a nurse for 10 years "until my arthritis set in." Then she took up quilting. Not only had she admired her mother's quilts, but her husband's mother made beautiful quilts, too.

Two years ago, Mrs. Sneed visited her daughter who works at the University of Kansas in Manhattan, Kan. It happened that Jacqueline Tobin, author of "Hidden in Plain View," was a guest lecturer at the university and noticed one of the wall hangings that Mrs. Sneed had made for her daughter's children. The historian used the Sneed quilt in her classes to teach about traditional patterns and colors. Mrs. Sneed later read "Hidden in Plain View," and became interested herself in the Underground Railroad Quilt Code and the stories associated with it.

Laura Sneed makes most of her quilts by hand, using material that she has acquired from one place or another. She recently used some valuable "mud cloth," an African woven cloth dyed with mud. She has worked on a large quilting frame, but lately has started using a lap frame quilter that is easier to handle and can be set on a table. She has had many requests to make quilts using the Underground Railroad Quilt Code. One of her 3-by-4-foot quilts typically includes 11 code patterns and a signature square specially requested by the person who asked for the quilt. She also places her initials in each quilt.

Mrs. Sneed expects to make quilts "for as long as the Lord lets me work these fingers." She can be reached at Laura's Originals, 1386 Julie McKnight Rd., Kittrell, NC 27544.

The Underground Railroad Quilt Code Patterns

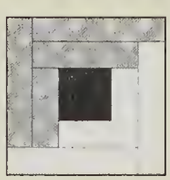
(Adapted from Ozella McDaniel Williams, as reported in "Hidden in Plain View: A Secret Story of Quilts and the Underground Railroad" by Jacqueline L. Tobin and Raymond G. Dobard. Published by Doubleday in 1999. Softcover edition by First Anchor Books, 2000.)

Monkey Wrench
Prepare the tools you'll need for the long journey, including the mental and spiritual tools. Or (as a Ship's Wheel), the pilot is prepared to begin the transport.

Wagon Wheel
Load the wagon or prepare to board the wagon to begin the escape.

Bear's Paw
Take a mountain trail, out of view. Follow the path made by bear tracks; they can lead you to water and food.

Crossroads
Refers to Cleveland, Ohio, a destination offering several routes to freedom. It also signifies reaching a point where a person's life will change, so one must be willing to go on.

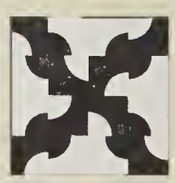


Log Cabin
A secret symbol that could be drawn on the ground indicating that a person is safe to talk to. It also advises seeking shelter.

Shoofly
Possibly identifies a friendly guide who is nearby and can help.

Bowtie
Dress in a disguise, or put on a change of clothes.

Flying Geese
Points to a direction to follow, such as where geese would fly during spring migration.



Drunkard's Path
Create a zig-zag path, do not walk in a straight line, to avoid pursuers in this area.

Star
Follow the North Star. Worked in conjunction with the popular song, "Follow the Drinking Gourd," a reference to the Big Dipper constellation.

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Issue Age	$50,000 Male	$50,000 Female	$100,000 Male	$100,000 Female	$250,000 Male	$250,000 Female	$500,000 Male	$500,000 Female
20	----	----	9.53	9.10	14.65	13.56	23.18	21.00
21	----	----	9.53	9.10	14.65	13.56	23.18	21.00
22	----	----	9.53	9.10	14.65	13.56	23.18	21.00
23	----	----	9.53	9.10	14.65	13.56	23.18	21.00
24	----	----	9.53	9.10	14.65	13.56	23.18	21.00
25	----	----	9.53	9.10	14.65	13.56	23.18	21.00
26	----	----	9.53	9.18	14.65	13.78	23.18	21.43
27	----	----	9.62	9.18	14.87	13.78	23.62	21.43
28	----	----	9.62	9.18	14.87	13.78	23.62	21.43
29	----	----	9.62	9.18	14.87	13.78	23.62	21.43
30	----	----	9.62	9.18	14.87	13.78	23.62	21.43
31	----	----	9.62	9.18	14.87	13.78	23.62	21.43
32	----	----	9.62	9.18	14.87	13.78	23.62	21.43
33	----	----	9.62	9.18	14.87	13.78	23.62	21.43
34	----	----	9.71	9.18	15.09	13.78	24.06	21.43
35	----	----	9.71	9.27	15.09	14.00	24.06	21.87
36	----	----	9.71	9.36	15.09	14.21	24.06	22.31
37	----	----	9.71	9.45	15.09	14.43	24.06	22.75
38	----	----	9.80	9.53	15.31	14.65	24.50	23.18
39	----	----	9.88	9.71	15.53	15.09	24.93	24.06
40	----	----	10.06	9.80	15.96	15.31	25.81	24.50
41	----	----	10.23	9.97	16.40	15.75	26.68	25.37
42	----	----	10.32	10.15	16.62	16.18	27.12	26.25
43	----	----	10.50	10.32	17.06	16.62	28.00	27.12
44	----	----	10.67	10.50	17.50	17.06	28.87	28.00
45	----	----	11.02	10.67	18.37	17.50	30.62	28.87

Call for more information

MONTHLY RATES

Issue Age	$50,000 Male	$50,000 Female	$100,000 Male	$100,000 Female	$250,000 Male	$250,000 Female	$500,000 Male	$500,000 Female
46	----	----	11.37	10.93	19.25	18.15	32.37	30.18
47	----	----	11.90	11.20	20.56	18.81	35.00	31.50
48	----	----	12.42	11.46	21.87	19.46	37.62	32.81
49	----	----	13.03	11.81	23.40	20.34	40.68	34.56
50	----	----	13.65	12.07	24.93	21.00	43.75	35.87
51	----	----	14.35	12.42	26.68	21.87	47.25	37.62
52	----	----	14.96	12.77	28.21	22.75	50.31	39.37
53	----	----	15.66	13.12	29.96	23.62	53.81	41.12
54	----	----	16.45	13.65	31.93	24.93	57.75	43.75
55	----	----	17.41	14.17	34.34	26.25	62.56	46.37
56	----	----	18.37	14.78	36.75	27.78	67.37	49.43
57	----	----	19.51	15.40	39.59	29.31	73.06	52.50
58	----	----	20.73	16.10	42.65	31.06	79.18	56.00
59	----	----	22.31	16.97	46.59	33.25	87.06	60.37
60	----	----	24.41	18.11	51.84	36.09	97.56	66.06
61	----	----	27.03	19.25	58.40	38.93	110.68	71.75
62	----	----	29.92	20.56	65.62	42.21	125.12	78.31
63	----	----	33.25	22.05	73.93	45.93	141.75	85.75
64	----	----	37.01	23.88	83.34	50.53	160.56	94.93
65	----	----	41.21	26.42	93.84	56.87	181.56	107.62

Call for more information

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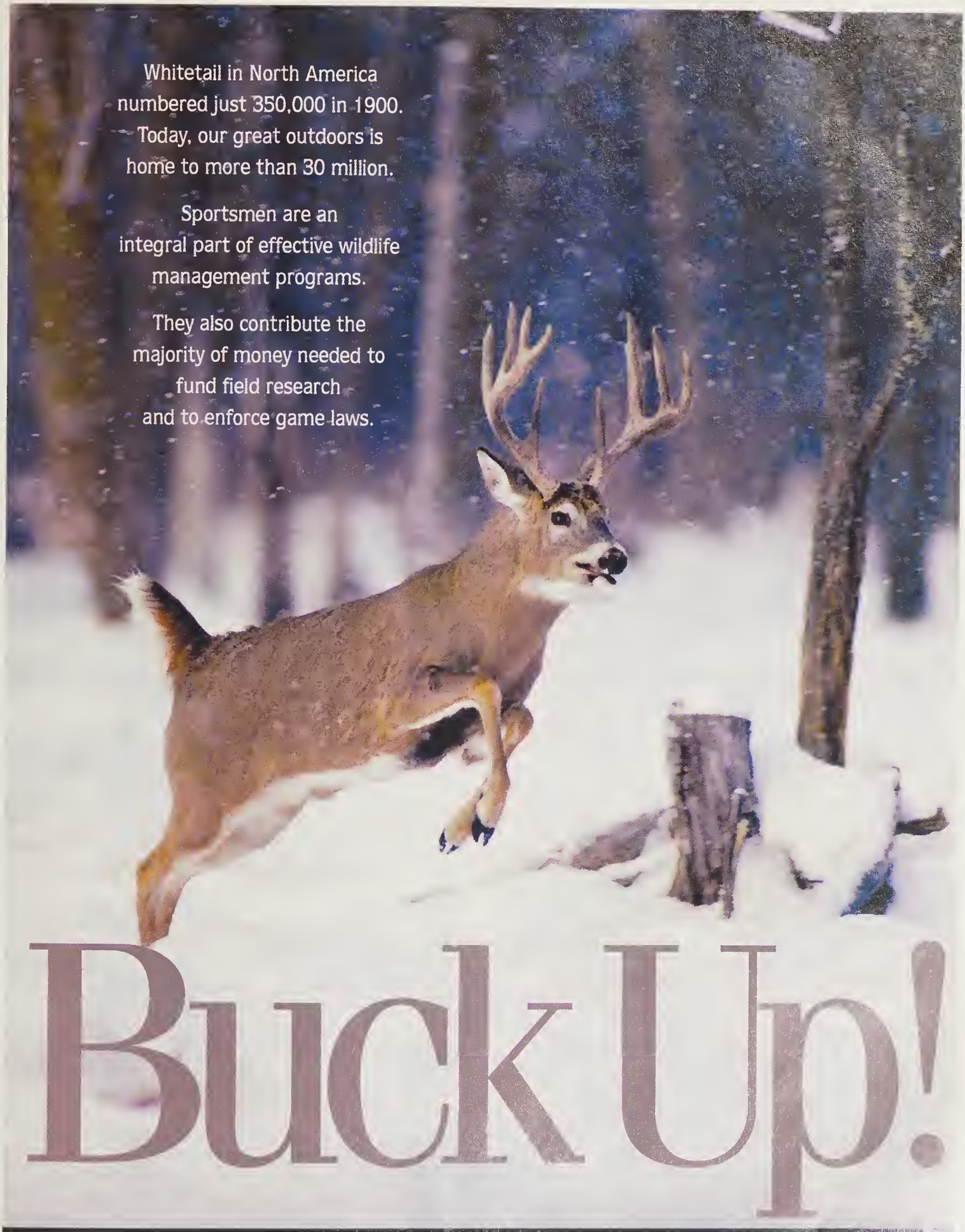
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Soap Shed

The Blue Ridge Soap Shed makes hand-poured herbal and aromatic soaps and salves. Most soaps are vegetable-based, using oils of olive and castor, and coconut, palm and shea butters. Additives include lavender, calendula, and chamomile. Fragrances include peppermint, patchouli, vanilla, rose, pumpkin and apple pie. There's a pumpkin-scented goats milk cream soap, and "Manly Men" soaps are scented with bay rum. Other products include "Grandma's Old Timey Lard & Lye" soaps, insect-repelling "Bug-Me-No-More" Bars" and "Dirty Dawg" shampoo bars. The Spruce Pine-based store, open May through December, ships mail order and online year-round. Visit http://www.soapshed.com/ or call (828) 765-6001.

Pottery pleasures

Garrou Pottery, based in Old Fort, sells a range of functional, attractive wares, including pieces designed for baking. Bowls are $17; candlesticks are $9.74. The Apple Baker sells for $9, and Becky's Bundt is $10.50. Both pieces come with recipes. Visit www.garroupottery.com or call (828) 669-0222.

Valentine getaway

A historic landmark, the Graystone Inn in Wilmington was recently voted as one of America's "Top 15 most romantic hideaways." The handsome, 14,300 square-foot mansion, built around the turn of the century, has appeared in numerous movies and television shows. A special midweek package good through March 15 offers two nights accommodations, champagne, evening cordials, dinner for two at a nearby restaurant, gourmet breakfasts for $392. Attractions nearby include Wilmington's riverfront, Historic District, cafes and restaurants, and horse-drawn carriage tours. Visit www.graystoneinn.com or call (910) 763-2000.

Ray's Splash Planet

Children and adults looking for winter water fun can visit Ray's Splash Planet, a unique, indoor water park in Charlotte. The 29,000 square-foot facility, an unusual joint venture between Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Department and Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, is on the Irwin Elementary School's campus. Ray's Splash Planet was funded by a bond,

and neighborhood residents participated in planning. Students named it after the department's mascot RAY (Recreate All Year). Year-round features include interactive water playgrounds, two-story tube slide, super soaker squirters, tumble buckets, and water basketball goals. $7 admission for youth, seniors and disabled; $5 for county residents; $10 adults, $7 county residents. Visit www.raysplashplanet.com or call (704) 432-4RAY.

Goose down

This shop's wares will put you to sleep ... comfortably. Dewoolfson Down sells white goose-down comforters, featherbeds and pillows. Comforters range from lightweight to thicker winter coverings. A standard goose down pillow (medium firmness) with 226 thread count, Egyptian cotton sells for $89. Products are hand-filled in the Blue Ridge mountains. Stores in Banner Elk, Blowing Rock, Charlotte and Hilton Head. Visit http://www.dewoolfsondown.com/ or call (800) 554-3696.

Police car exhibit

A unique display at the Holiday Travel Park Camping Resort features police cars across the U.S., including various North Carolina police cars. The miniature models are of cars in use today, and replicate vehicles from Cary, Chapel Hill, Apex, Asheville, Boone and North Carolina State Police. Established to honor law enforcement officers, the site in Four Oaks, Johnston County, presents "every state police car in the United States." A large railroad model with die cast rail cars is also displayed, featuring a large amusement park with working rides, four running trains and a monorail. Admission is free, and the display is open from 9 A.M. to 9 P.M. Miniature models of some police cars featured are $25. They can be purchased at the resort, or by calling (919) 934-3181 or by visiting www.bhlimo.com/police.htm.

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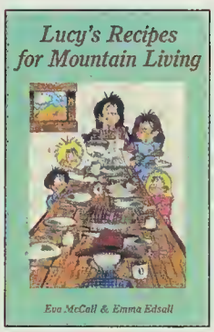
ON THE BOOKSHELF

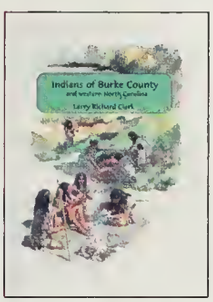
"Fire in the Rock"

The racial prejudices of the 1950s and 1960s are chronicled in author Joe Martin's first novel, a fictional account of two childhood friends, one black, one white, who return to their hometown after 10 years have passed. The author, a South Carolina native, shares observations about friendship, Southern life, and the role that religion can play both to liberate and to oppress. Martin, who is completely paralyzed, completed "Fire in the Rock" with the help of an Eyegaze System computer that allowed him to type by focusing his eyes on the letters of a keyboard. He recalls that he grew up in a time when "People were very civil to each other, but not so civil to people who looked otherwise, or thought otherwise." The 280-page novel is $21.95, from Blair Publishing. Visit www.blairpub.com/fiction/fireinrock.htm or call (800) 222-9796.



"Lucy's Recipes for Mountain Living"

Authors Eva McCall and Emma Edsall recall their grandmother daily activities in the kitchen in this lighthearted book. From cornbread to baked bear and blackberry pie to leather britches, many mountain recipes are here. Lucy's recipes for Mountain Living is a companion book to McCall's previous novels about western North Carolina character Lucy Davenport. $9, softcover, 96 pages, published by Bright Mountain Books, Inc. All three books may be purchased at bookstores, or at www.BooksBMB@aol.com or call (800) 437-3959.

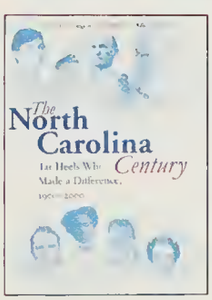


Indians of Burke County

Many prehistoric Indian sites in Burke County have been recorded, with one archaeological survey logging more than 2,000 stone artifacts and 2,500 ceramic specimens. Surveyor Larry Burke provides a brief overview of prehistoric research to date, along with a current perspective on Indian inhabitants of western North Carolina, in his publication called "Indians of Burke County and Western North Carolina." The report identifies issues of protection and preservation for Native American heritage and includes textbook-style outlines of geological periods, hand-drawn illustrations of spears and typical stone tools, and native food recipes. Spiral-bound softcover, 78 pages. 8.5 inch by 11 inch. TimeSpan Press. $8. Email: larryRclark@earthlink.net or call (828) 433-1726.

"Charles Kuralt's People"

"Every day I would seek out some cop or cab driver and tell his story in a few hundred words," Kuralt wrote of his experience as a Charlotte News columnist. A new book presents 169 of his award-winning columns, written when Kuralt was only 22 years old. The columns ring familiar to those who watched the late CBS newsman's Emmy-winning television shows "On the Road" and "Sunday Morning." The hardcover book, edited by Ralph Grizzle and published by Kenilworth Media, is $25.95. The book is available at bookstores, www.charleskuraltspeople.com or call (828) 252-6757.



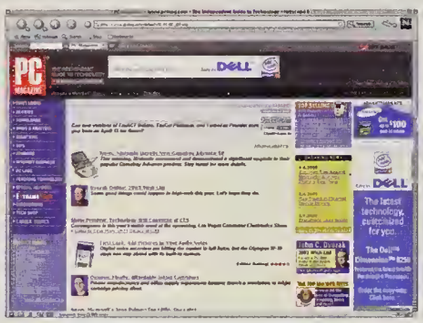
"Tar Heels Who Made A Difference"

This new collection profiles people who shaped life in the twentieth century. Authored by former journalists Marion A. Ellis and Howard E. Covington, "The North Carolina Century: Tar Heels Who Made A Difference" includes 160 biographical sketches of folks with accomplishments in agriculture, the arts, business, education, law, media, politics, public service, religion, sports and popular culture. Included are writer Thomas Wolfe, former senator Jesse Helms, musician Doc Watson, and racecar driver Richard Petty, along with lesser known North Carolinians such as North Carolina Central University founder James E. Shepard and U.S. Commissioner of Welfare Ellen Winston. Published by the University of North Carolina Press, the hardcover book is $39.95. 656 pages, 160 photos. Visit www.uncpress.unc.edu or call (800) 848-6224.

How do users rate their computers, peripherals and tech support?

Anytime you buy a personal computer, whether it's your first or your fifth, whether for yourself, your children or your company, you face uncertainty.

Will the computer work, or will it be dead on arrival? Will it work initially but fail after a few weeks? Will it work for the most part but give you headaches along the way? Will you be able to get help quickly if you can't fix the inevitable glitches yourself?



You can't eliminate the uncertainties of buying, but you can minimize them by being an informed consumer. Three magazines have recently published the findings of their latest surveys.

According to the subscribers of PC World, the company that makes the most reliable personal computer today and backs them the best doesn't even make PCs – it makes Macs. Apple received the highest overall marks in the desktop computer category for reliability and service.

Other desktop machines receiving "Good" marks for overall reliability and service are those of IBM, ABS, and Dell, as well as the generic "white boxes" of local retailers.

Despite its good overall score, Dell received lower marks than it did last year, as did a number of other companies, including Gateway, Micron, and the newly merged Hewlett Packard/Compaq. In a tough economy, PC reliability and service have slipped overall.

The only company to receive a "Poor" overall mark from PC World subscribers was Systemax, which supplies PCs to mail-order vendor Tiger Direct.

Companies making the most reliable notebook computers and supporting them the best are IBM and Toshiba. No notebook manufacturer received an overall "Poor" mark.

Dell received the best overall score for reliability and service in the desktop category in another recent survey, from PC Magazine. It received an A grade from PC Magazine readers, the only company so honored. Computers receiving a B+ were those from Gateway and generic white boxes of local retailers. The two companies that failed, getting an E, were Compaq and eMachines.

Apple wasn't included in the PC Magazine survey results for desktop computers because not enough respondents rated it. But it received a "Good" score in the PC World magazine survey, received a dismal D in the PC Magazine survey, which probably illustrates more than anything that despite their usefulness, surveys aren't infallible.

The picture with notebook PCs is different. Companies earning an A grade from PC Magazine readers were Apple, Hewlett-Packard, IBM and Toshiba. Three companies received an E grade: Acer, Compaq and NEC.

Consumer Reports magazine also just published the findings of its latest computer reliability and support survey, though it didn't break out its findings by desktop and notebook computers. For overall reliability, Consumer Reports readers ranked Apple best, followed in order by Dell, HP, IBM and Compaq. Gateway and Micron received the worst reliability scores.

Apple also ranked at the top for technical support, according to Consumer Reports readers. Following, in order, were Dell, Gateway, Micron, IBM, Compaq and HP. Sony and eMachines were at the bottom.

What should you make of all this? A Mac can be a good choice. Windows PCs may comprise 95 percent of the market and, for better or worse, are a fait accompli in many organizations. But for home or home office users or others who have a choice, Apple is worth a look.

You'll usually pay somewhat more for a Mac, but you'll get a somewhat more reliable and better supported machine. Windows machines continue to become more user-friendly, but Macs are still easier to set up, learn and use. You have many more software and peripheral choices with Windows machines, but there are still thousands of Mac programs and peripherals to choose from. You'll have a slightly easier time sharing documents with a Windows machine, but Macs have come a long way in bridging the compatibility gap.

If you opt for a Windows PC desktop machine, based on the above reliability and service findings and all other things being equal, it's hard to beat Dell. For Windows PC notebooks, IBM and Toshiba are good choices.

Reliability and service aren't the only important criteria of course in selecting a personal computer. But they can be the most important.

PC Magazine also rated peripherals. The reliability and service winners in their respective categories were Hewlett-Packard for printers; Sony, Canon, Fuji, Minolta, Nikon and Olympus for digital cameras; Handspring for personal digital assistants; and Linksys, Netgear and SMC for home networking.

Local Internet service providers received the highest grade for dial-up Internet access, Optimum Online for broadband access.

Reid Goldsborough is a syndicated columnist and author of the book Straight Talk About the Information Superhighway. He can be reached at reidgold@netaxs.com or http://www.netaxs.com/~reidgold/column.

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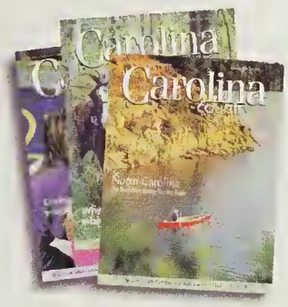

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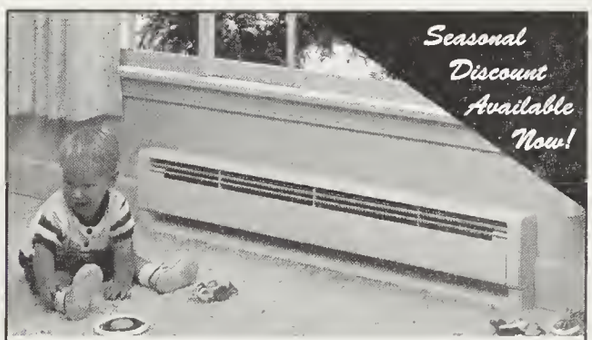

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The Best Duck Dog in Carteret County

By Rodney Kemp

A big, big deal in Carteret County is duck hunting. It's the craziest sport I've ever seen in my life. It's cold. It's wet. You might not see a duck. And they say it's the most fun there's ever been!

I don't understand that. But I have studied duck hunters. To be a successful duck hunter you've got to have a good duck dog. Some of the duck hunters in Carteret County even think more of their duck dogs than they do their wives. I don't know why, it's just a prevailing attitude.

I get up early on Saturday mornings with some friends of mine and we run to Beaufort and back. We think we're the only ones crazy enough to be up that early in the morning, but then we see them pick-up trucks drive by with them duck hunters, and they've got their duck dogs sittin' on the front seat with those little earphones on, listenin' to the stereo.

So, I'll take you down to the far reaches of eastern Carteret County to a place called Cedar Island. One person said, "Cedar Island's not the end of the world, but you can see the end of the world from there!" It's way down there.

It was one of those bone-chillin' mornings when Lester Gray and Howard Douglass were gettin' in their skiff, gettin' ready to go across Cedar Island Bay to Hog Island to kill their limit of ducks for the day, and they've got their duck dogs in the boat with 'em. And just to break the silence of the bone-chillin' morning, Lester Gray turns to Howard Douglass and says, "Howard, my dog Trooper here is the best duck dog in the whole world."

Well, Howard couldn't stand a boast like that, and he said, "Lester, Trooper ain't even the best duck dog in this here boat." Said, "My dog Duke here is the best duck dog in the whole world and $5 says I can prove it to you." So the bet was on.

When they reached the shore, there to Hog Island, ol' Duke jumped outta the boat and disappeared up the shoreline outta sight.

Lester Gray rubbed his hands together as if to say, "This'll be the easiest $5 I've ever earned. That dog ain't even disciplined enough to hang around 'til we get in the duck blind."

But before they got settled good in the duck blind, they see this speck on the horizon coming down the shore at a fast rate of speed, and it's ol' Duke. He skids in on his belly in front of that duck blind, and he holds up one paw.

And Lester says, "Howard, what's that mean?"

Howard says, "That means there's one duck coming, and you better be ready."

Sure enough one little duck appeared in the eastern sky. BANG! They shot that duck, and Duke retrieved it, then disappeared up the shoreline out of sight again.

Waited a few more minutes. Suddenly that speck appeared coming down the shoreline at a faster rate of speed, and it was ol' Duke again, and he skidded in on his belly in front of that duck blind, and he perked up both ears.

Lester Gray said, "Howard, what does that mean?"

Howard says, "There's two ducks coming and they're flying low." Sure enough, two ducks appeared just about water level. They shot 'em, BANG BANG! Duke retrieved one and let Trooper retrieve the other just so Trooper would feel useful.

Ol' Duke disappeared up the shoreline out of sight, and even Howard got a little nervous this time. They looked up at the horizon, and coming down at a faster rate of speed than the other two times was ol' Duke, and they noticed he had a stick in his mouth and he was shaking his head fiercely with that stick in his mouth as he skidded in on his belly in front of that duck blind.

Lester Gray said, "Howard, what the hell does that mean?"

And Howard replied, "It means there's more ducks than you can shake a stick at, and you owe me $5!"

"Tales From the Fish House" are now on videotape

Storytelling has become something of an art form in Down East North Carolina. Years ago, the people who lived and worked here on the coast devised all sorts of ways to entertain themselves, and telling stories was one of them. They gathered at crossroad country stores and fish houses to spin their tales with each other. Certain storytellers earned admiration for their special abilities at the "tall tales." In Carteret County, they were known as "fish house liars." There are still plenty of them around today.

As a way to preserve the fine art of fish house lying, the Morehead City Rotary Club organized the first Down East Storytelling Festival in 2002. Local historian Rodney Kemp hosted the event. The former public school history teacher is also known as a fish house liar himself. He teaches Carteret County history at the local community college, where his classes fill quickly, probably because he adds humor to what sometimes can be a dry subject.

At last year's storytelling event, Kemp maintained the pace with local storytellers Red Daniels from Cedar Island, James Allen Rose from Harkers Island, Connie Mason from Morehead City and John Golden from Wilmington.

"We felt it only appropriate that the event be moved to the true down east," says Rotary coordinator Bill Ward. "You get the true feel of local flavor when you hear these stories in this beautiful setting where many of them originated."

Rodney Kemp has produced his first videotape project entitled "Tales From The Fish House." It is a one hour, VHS tape with about 15 selections. Including local favorites such as "Ole Jake," "Edna – You're Bad Luck," "The Cedar Island Fire Department," and "The World's Best Duck Dog." Copies cost $25 each and are available from Crystal Images, 1102 Hedrick Blvd., Morehead City, NC 28557. Phone: (252) 247-5734.

2003 Down East Storytelling Festival

The Second Annual Down East Storytelling Festival will be held at 7 p.m. on Saturday, March 22 at West Carteret High School in Morehead City. Admission is $10 for adults, $5 for children age 12 and under. For more information, call (252) 247-5734.

Was Abraham Lincoln born in western North Carolina?

by Charles Joyner

In 1899, less than 35 years after Lincoln's assassination, James H. Cathey of Sylva wrote and published the third edition of a book, entitled "The Genesis of Lincoln," in which he endeavors to prove "an interesting fact in the story of America's most remarkable man."

Quoting interviews and letters from widely scattered sources, Cathey makes a case that Lincoln's mother, Nancy Hanks, became pregnant as a servant girl in the home of Abraham Enloe, located on Ocona Lufta, about 14 miles from Bryson City in what is now Swain County.

"We resolved at the outset," Cathey writes in his foreword, "that we would interrogate none but the most trustworthy — people who were in the best position to give a reason for the faith that was in them, together with the story of the relatives of the distinguished subject of our memoir."

Abraham Enloe fathered nine sons and seven daughters by his wife (a former Miss Egerton). The ninth and only surviving son in 1899 was Wesley M. Enloe. Wesley was 88 years old when he was interviewed by Cathey at the Enloe home — the same house on the same farm where his father and mother lived when Nancy Hanks was banished from the household and sent to Kentucky.

Wesley Enloe said in 1899: "I was born after the incident between father and Nancy Hanks. I have, however, a vivid recollection of hearing the name Nancy Hanks frequently mentioned when I was a boy. No, I never heard my father mention it; he was always silent on the subject so far as I know. . . . I have no doubt that the cause of my father's sending her to Kentucky is the one generally alleged."

Cathey interviewed Joseph A. Collins, then 56 and living in Clyde in Haywood County. Collins said he met a Judge Gilmore in 1867, who said he knew Nancy Hanks

before she was married, and that she then had a child she called Abraham. "While the child was yet small," Collins quoted Judge Gilmore, "she married a man by the name of Lincoln, after which the boy was known as Abraham Lincoln."

" Years ago," Collins quoted Judge Gilmore, "on Turkey Creek in Buncombe County, N.C., I met an old gentleman whose name was Phillis Wells. Wells said he was then 90 years old. When he was a young man he traveled over the country selling tinware and buying furs, feathers and ginseng. On one occasion he called on Abraham Enloe to stay overnight, as was his custom."

Enloe went with Wells to the barn to put up the peddler's horse, Judge Gilmore said. While there, Enloe told Wells: "My wife is mad; about to tear up the place; she has not spoken to me in two weeks, and I wanted to tell you about it before you went in the house."

Wells asked, "What is the matter?" And Abraham Enloe replied, "The trouble is about Nancy Hanks, a hired girl we have living with us."

As Cathey reports it, Wells said he returned to the Enloe place some time later and by that time Abraham Enloe had sent Nancy Hanks to Jonathan's Creek and hired a family there to take care of her, and that later a child was born to Nancy Hanks and she named him Abraham.

Cathey also interviewed Capt. William A. Enloe, then 66, a grandson of Abraham Enloe. William Enloe said: "One Mr. Thompson married my Aunt Nancy [Enloe], contrary to the will of my grandfather. . . .Thompson stole her away and went to Kentucky; on the trip they were married. Hearing of their marriage, my grandfather reflected and decided to invite them back home. On their return, they were informed of the tumult in the household because of Nancy Hanks, who had given birth to a child. When my uncle and aunt returned to their Kentucky home they took with them Nancy Hanks and her child. This is the family story as near as I can reproduce it from memory."

An Asheville lawyer named Col. Davidson, who married into the Enloe family, and who settled Abraham Enloe's estate, related that shortly after the Civil War a man came to his office and introduced himself as a son of Nancy Enloe Thompson. The Thompson man stated that he was a Democrat and had been an Indian agent during Lincoln's administration.

"I asked," Col. Davidson said, "why Lincoln, who was a Republican, appointed a Democrat an Indian agent. Thompson replied that the President was under some great obligation to his [Thompson's] mother, and had expressed a desire to aid her in some substantial way. 'This is the way I got my appointment,' he told me."

Capt. James W. Terrell (born in Rutherford County in December 1829) recalled a conversation with a Dr. Egerton of Hendersonville, a relative of Mrs. Abraham Enloe. Dr. Egerton told him, Terrell said, that in the fall of 1860, just before the Presidential election, he had a guest in his home, a Mr. Davis, also a Rutherford County native, who had moved to Illinois in the early 1850s and had become "intimately acquainted with Abraham Lincoln."

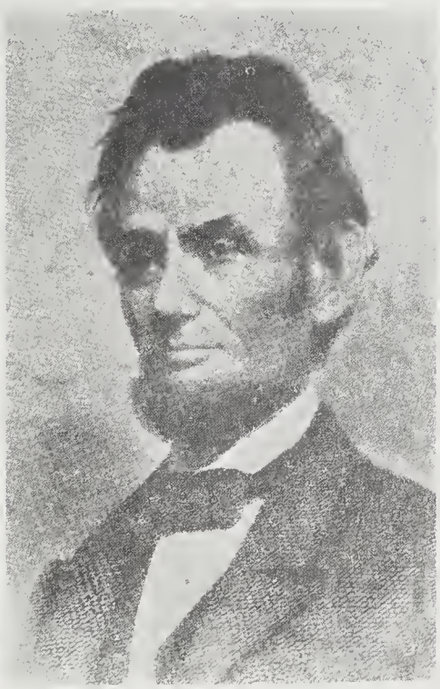
"In a private and confidential talk," Davis is quoted as saying, Lincoln told him he was of Southern extraction, that his right name was, or ought to have been, Enloe, but that he had always gone by the name of his stepfather.

After reading Cathey's book, I picked up the Hendersonville phone book and called the first three Enloes listed. "The story is common knowledge in the family," Bryce Enloe of Edneyville told me. "I come from the same set of Enloes."

"I heard it from my grandparents," said Keith Enloe of Laurel Park. "It has been passed down from generation to generation."

"Abraham Enloe was my great-great grandfather," said Robert Enloe of Big Willow community. "I've heard the story all my life. I know it is true."

Was Abraham Lincoln the son of a western North Carolina farmer? You be the judge.



James Cathey's book includes these photographs on facing pages. Lincoln's alleged half-brother, Wesley Enloe, was 81 in the photo on the left. His figure bears a striking resemblance to Lincoln, shown when he was President. The photos are from the fourth edition of James Cathey's book, "The Genesis of Lincoln," published in 1939 by B.H. Cathey, Canton, N.C. They are reproduced here courtesy of William Enloe, of Edneyville.

Charles Joyner is a Carolina Country correspondent living in Hendersonville.

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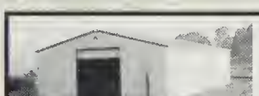

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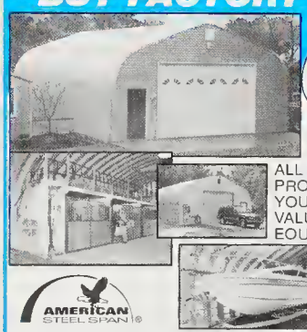

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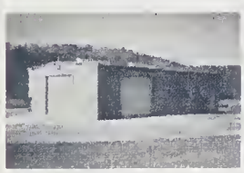

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Match the boxes above with the boxes below to find a hidden word in the answer to this multiplication problem.

						X	F

Word play

WARD-WAR-WAY-LAY

"Art is long and Time is fleeting..."
H. W. Longfellow

To go from ART to LONG you must change a letter or add a letter in each step to spell a different word. Letters may be rearranged in any step. Your answer may be different from ours.

1. ART
2. _ _ _
3. _ _ _ _
4. _ _ _ _
5. LONG

Answers on page 36

FAMOUS LAST WORDS?

"...but I would prefer liberty."
– PATRICK HENRY

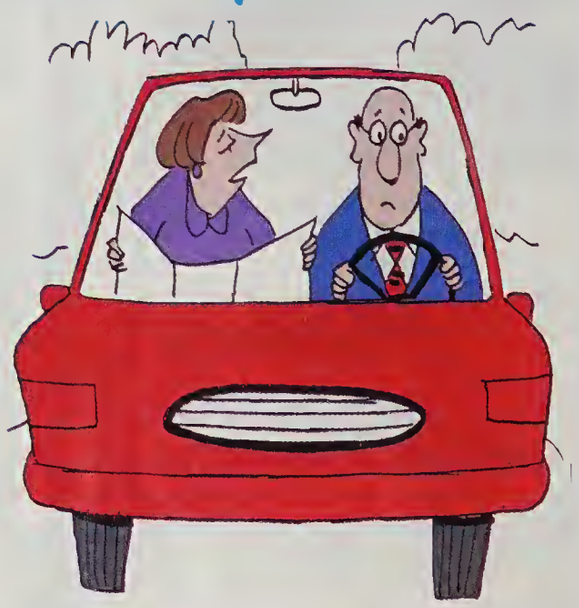
what's in a NAME?

In observance of George Washington's birthday this month we have assigned each of the nine different letters in WASHINGTON a different value from 1 through 9. Your challenge is to find the value of each letter, given the total letter values in these nine words:

SWING = 31 WISH = 23 GNASH = 21 SNAG = 19
TOWN = 18 SWAN = 18 GNAT = 17 HIS = 15

W A S H I N G T O N
__ + __ + __ __ + __ + __ + __ + __ + __ = 46

Oh, Kay!



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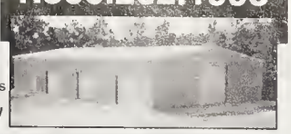
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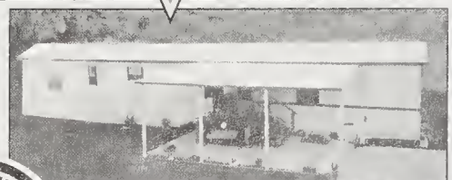
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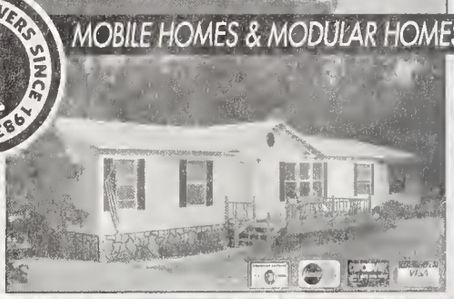
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WASHINGTON(46) - WISH(23) - GNAT(17) - N(1) = 0(5). O=5
WISH(23) - HIS(15) = W(8). W=8
TOWN(18) - O(5) - W(8) - N(1) = T(4). T=4
SWAN(18) - W(8) = SAN(10). SANG(19) - SAN(10) = G(9). G=9
GASH(21) - SNAG(19) = H(2). H=2
GNAT(17) -G(9) - N(1) - T(4) = A(3). A=3
SAN(10) -A(3) - N(1) = S(6). S=6
HIS(15) - H(2) - S(6) = I(7). I=7
W+A+S+H+I+N+G+T+O+N
8+3+6+2+7+1+9+4+5+1 = 46

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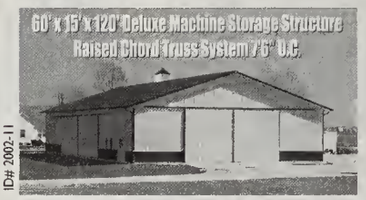

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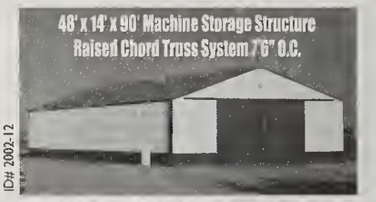

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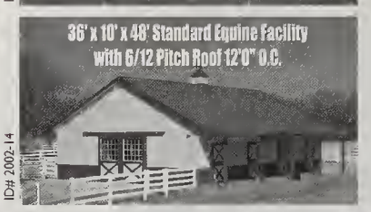
ID# 2002-13
*Priced From $12,615 to $13,975



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February EVENTS

Fresh ideas for your home and garden can be found at the Southern Spring Show in Charlotte. The show, Feb. 22–March 2, features displays and live exhibits such as this one for horticulture, interior design, arts and crafts, gardening and outdoor accessories, and will be at the Charlotte Merchandise Mart. Call (704) 376-6594 or visit www.southernspringshow.com.

MOUNTAINS
(west of I-77)

Old Fort Mountain Music
Friday evenings. Marion.
(828) 652-3330.
www.mcdowellnc.org

Old Time Jam
Friday evenings. Boone.
(800) 852-9506.
www.visitboone.com

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Through Feb. 23. Asheville.
(828) 253-3227.
www.ashevillearts.org

Hay Rides
Feb. 1. Blowing Rock.
Free. (828) 295-7851.

Dog Sledding
Feb. 1-2. Blowing Rock.
(828) 295-7851.

Self-Esteem Pageant
Feb. 2. Murphy.
(828) 837-2242.

Play about MLK Jr.
Feb. 7. Spindale.
(828) 286-9990
www.FoundationShows.org

N.C. Indoor Motorcross
Feb. 7-8. Asheville.
(828) 323-5497.

"Crimes of the Heart"
Feb. 7-22. Hickory.
(828) 328-2283.

Appalachia Women Exhibit
Feb. 8-April 6. Asheville.
(828) 253-9231.

Sports Show
Feb. 14-16. Asheville.
(828) 259-5544.

Tough Man Contest
Feb. 21-23. Asheville.
(828) 259-5544.

Monster Truck Show
Feb. 21-23. Asheville.
(828) 628-9626.

Boat Show
Feb. 21-23. Hickory.
(828) 324-8600.

Winter Madness Party
Feb. 22. Beech Mountain.
(828) 387-9283.

Basket Weaving Class
Feb. 22. Belmont.
(704) 829-1271.

Camper/RV Show
Feb. 28-March 2. Hickory.
(828) 324-8600.

New York Chamber Soloists
Feb. 28. Asheville.
(828) 274-9199.

Koresh Dance
Feb. 28-March 1. Asheville.
(828) 257-4530.

PIEDMONT
(between I-77 and I-95)

70s Film Festival
Through March 1. Greensboro.
(336) 335-5430.
www.greensborolibrary.com

From Ragtime To Rap
Through Feb. 2. Charlotte.
(704) 374-1565.

Chamber Music
Feb. 3. Durham.
(919) 560-2788.
www.mallarmemusic.org

Margin Writing Lecture
Feb. 5. Winston-Salem.
Free. (336) 721-7360.
www.oldsalem.org

"Picasso's Closet"
Feb. 5. Durham.
Free. (919) 660-3356.
www.duke.edu/web/dia

Ciompi Quartet
Feb. 6. Durham.
(919) 684-5135.
www.duke.edu/web/duma

S.H.O.E. Banquet
Feb. 6. Matthews.
(704) 753-4576.

Anna Deveare Smith
Feb. 7. Durham.
(919) 660-3356
www.duke.edu/web/dia

Orchids at Weymouth
Feb. 7-9. Southern Pines.
(910) 692-6261.

Black Film Festival
Feb. 7-9. Durham.
Free. (919) 683-1709.
www.hayti.org

International Jazz Festival
Feb. 7-April 18. Durham.
(919) 684-4444.
www.duke.edu/music

Community Day
Feb. 8. Winston-Salem.
Free. (336) 725-1904.
www.secca.org

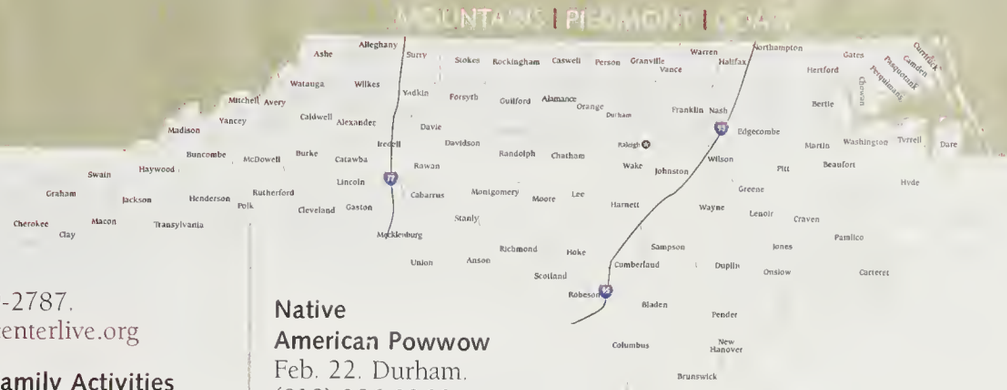
Travelogue: "Costa Rica"
Feb. 9. Southern Pines.
(910) 692-6261.

Organ Recital
Feb. 9. Durham.
Free. (919) 660-3300.

Jazz Band Concert
Feb. 13. Southern Pines.
(910) 695-3819.

"Harry, The Dirty Dog"
Feb. 13-14. Winston-Salem.
(336) 725-4531.
www.childrenstheatrews.org

Arts School Photo Exhibit
Feb. 13-19. Greenville.
(252) 748-1946.
www.ncarts.edu



Southern Furniture Exhibit
Feb. 14-June 15. Raleigh.
(919) 715-0200.
www.ncmuseumofhistory.org

"Momix" (Dance)
Feb. 14. Durham.
(919) 560-3040.
www.carolinatheatre.org

Longhorn Rodeo
Feb. 14-16. Winston-Salem.
(336) 725-5635. www.ljvm.com

"The Cemetery Club"
Feb. 14-16. Kernersville.
(336) 993-6556.
www.kltheatre.org

Square Dance
Feb. 15. Denton.
(336) 475-9397.

The Fiddling Poet
Feb. 15. Carrboro.
(919) 929-2787.
www.artscenterlive.org

Musical Family Activities
Feb. 15. Durham.
(919) 560-2788.

Nnenna Freelon
Feb. 15. Durham.
(919) 560-3040.
www.carolinatheatre.org

Classical Concert
Feb. 17. Southern Pines.
(910) 295-1466.

"Macbeth"
Feb. 19-23. Southern Pines.
(910) 692-3799.

18th Century Vases Lecture
Feb. 18. Charlotte.
(704) 365-4539.

Native American Powwow
Feb. 22. Durham.
(919) 286-3366
www.ncssm.edu

NASCAR Series
Feb. 22. Rockingham.
(910) 582-2861.

Spring Show
Feb. 22-March 2. Charlotte.
(704) 376-6594.
www.southernspringshow.com

Alberti Flea Circus
Feb. 22. Carrboro
(919) 929-2787.
www.artscenterlive.org

Family Puppet Show
Feb. 22. Kernersville.
(336) 996-7922.
www.kornersfolly.org

Artie Shaw Orchestra
Feb. 23. Carrboro.
(919) 929-2787.
www.artscenterlive.org

Winston Cup Racing
Feb. 23. Rockingham.
(910) 582-2861.

"Greater Tuna"
Feb. 25-March 2. Charlotte.
(704) 372-1000.
www.performingartsctr.org

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FEBRUARY EVENTS

COAST
(east of I-95)

The Stevens Center
Ongoing. Winston-Salem.
Feb. 5, "South Pacific" | Feb. 25, "Evening with Groucho" | Feb. 28, "Avner The Eccentric" |
(336) 721-1945.

Chamber Music
Through Feb. 22. New Bern
(252) 638-2577.

Chocolate Festival
Feb. 1. Morehead City.
(252) 504-2203.

Cape Fear Museum
Ongoing. Wilmington.
Through May 26, historic flags display | Through Sept. 1, "What's Cooking" | (910) 341-4350. www.nhcgov.com/CFM

Black History Exhibit
Feb. 1-28. Whiteville.
(910) 914-4185.

Chamber Banquet
Feb. 4. Tabor City.
(910) 653-2031.

Horse Show
Feb. 1-2. Lake Waccamaw.
(910) 646-3083.

Seafood Series
Feb. 4, 20. Roanoke Island.
(252) 473-3494.

Civil War History
Feb. 8. Elizabeth City.
Free. (252) 335-1453.

Dulcimers
Feb. 9-March 1. Elizabeth City.
(252) 338-6997.

Laser Show.
Feb. 13-14. Elizabeth City.
(252) 335-3759.

Love in the Sea
Feb. 14. Roanoke Island.
(252) 473-3494.

Civil War Program
Feb. 15-16. Brunswick site.
(910) 371-6613.

Shady Grove Bluegrass band
Feb. 15. Bayboro.
(252) 249-3079.
www.pamlicomusic.org

"Women in Music"
Feb. 28. Oriental.
(252) 249-3079.
www.pamlicomusic.org

LISTING INFORMATION

Deadline for April: Feb. 28 | Deadline for May: April 2

Please include title, date(s), location, phone number and/or Web site url. Photos (300 dpi or hard copies) are welcome.

Send notices to: Carolina Compass, P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, NC 27611 | Fax: (919) 878-3970 | e-mail: carolina.country@ncemcs.com

First Flight

DECEMBER 17, 1903 — KITTY HAWK, N.C.

This famous photograph was made by John T. Daniels of the Kill Devil Hill Lifesaving Station at about 10:35 a.m. on Thursday, Dec. 17, 1903, in a sandy area of what was then Kitty Hawk (now in the town of Kill Devil Hills). Orville Wright is at the controls of the first heavier-than-air powered flyer to be launched successfully. Wilbur Wright is seen running along at the right. He had been steadying the craft on its runner (seen coming in from the left) and had just released his hold on the forward upright of the wing. Also seen is a wing rest, a coil box and other tools.

The flight into a 21 miles-per-hour wind was the first of four that day. The flyer reached an altitude of 10 feet, covered 120 feet and lasted 12 seconds. Wilbur took the controls on the second attempt at 11:20 a.m. and flew 195 feet. Then Orville flew 200 feet over 15 seconds, and Wilbur took it 852 feet in 59 seconds.

The original photographic print exists as part of the collection of Wright State University Libraries.

The print has been digitally restored by photographer Peter Hornby in collaboration with the university and the Eastern National education association serving the National Park Service. Printed in black and white or sepia tone on quality postcard stock, the photograph is 12 by 18 inches and sells for $3 at the Wright Brothers National Monument in Kill Devil Hills. Peter Hornby also will ship it for $7, postpaid. To order copies (specify black and white or sepia), contact Peter Hornby, P.O. Box 7099, Ocean Park ME 04063. Or reach him at P.O. Box 456, Avon, NC 27915.

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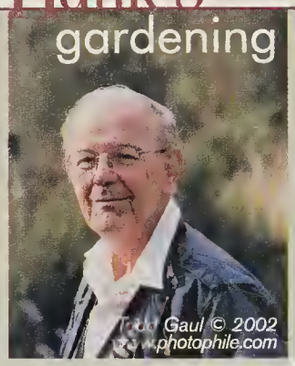
Hank's gardening guide

by Hank Smith



The time is here when winter plays hide-and-seek with spring. Blooms of many shrubs such as the spirea group, oriental magnolia, flowering quince and forsythia are giving us colorful reminders that spring will soon be with us. Their displays are underscored with colors of daffodils, thrift and violets. As days lengthen, gardening activities increase.

Gardening for Fresh Vegetables

A recent national survey reveals that 57% of gardeners surveyed have started growing vegetables in recent years or have increased the size of their vegetable plantings. Among the most common reasons given were: "Makes the budget go further;" "Vegetable prices are increasing constantly;" and "Growing vegetables is just as relaxing as growing flowers." The sale of vegetable seed and plants has shown a marked increase in recent years.

Black Versus White

Landscape architects borrow a rule from professional photographers. When they photograph a subject of light coloring, it is posed against a dark background. And a dark subject requires a lightly colored background. White and colored flowers are planted in front of dark backgrounds, including fences, stone walls, and buildings. Or deep, dark colors are displayed near white fences or buildings.

Planting Deciduous Shrubs

Deciduous shrubs, while bare of leaves in the winter, can be transplanted bare-root during the dormant season. Set plants approximately an inch deeper than they were growing in other yard areas or in the nursery row. If you dig your own, take care not to scrape roots with the spade. Water newly transplanted shrubs even though the soil may appear moist. Water helps drive out air pockets, making for a close contact between roots and soil.

The contrast of bright pink against the white hou makes both the flowers and home stand out mor

Houseplants Go Outdoors

Winter houseplants such as begonia, geranium, impatiens and coleus often become overgrown and leggy by February. To add welcome color to outdoor flower beds in the late spring and summer, make root cuttings of these houseplants now. Root in moist sand. Strong root systems will develop before the weather warms in the spring.

No More Voles

If voles have been a problem in eating plant stems and roots, place a shovelful of sharp gravel around the roots of a plant when it is set into the ground. Voles don't like digging through gravel. Another control: bury fine-mesh wire along the perimeter of the planting bed.

GARDENING FOCUS

Preparing Soil for Planting

Soil should be dry before it is turned, loosened and amended without compacting and leaving it in hard-to-work-with clods. To judge if soil is dry enough, pick up a handful and squeeze it in your palm. Then drop it. If the soil breaks up, it can be worked. If the handful remains a clod, wait to "work" the soil.

Even if garden soil was turned over in the fall, till it again if the ground is dry enough and weather is warm enough. The extra tilling will expose over-wintering harmful insects to the killing cold.

Also, spade lime into the soil if it's needed. Lime requires several weeks to become chemically incorporated into the soil.

HORT shorts

- Small-scale flowering trees and low-growing shrubs can put a natural picture frame around a house when viewed from the street.
- A lawn can be shrunk by replacing turfgrass with drought-tolerant groundcovers such as creeping junipers and wormwood. In addition, Carolina jessamine vine and English ivy can be trained into groundcovers.
- Cut back cold-damaged liriope foliage. Avoid tipping new growth, or there will be brown edges for the year to come. If pruning is done now, use hedge shears or a mower set at its highest setting. Pruning later will mean cutting by hand.
- Nasturtium grows rapidly and produces showy, round leaves and brightly-colored flowers. These help to mask bulb foliages as they mature, and produce food to store for next year s blooms.
- Phlox drummondi doesn t like to be transplanted. It should be grown in peat pots or pots made of pressed nutrients through which tender roots can penetrate after pots are set in the soil outdoors.
- By studied planning and careful rotation of flowering plants from a commercial grower, it s possible to achieve a major landscape triumph in a small garden spot.
- Chrysanthemums have become a year-round flower, instead of an autumn-only beauty. This is accomplished by growing plants in the dark for controlled periods, which forces them into bloom out of their natural season.
- Crape myrtle trees and shrubs are some of the most popular plants in Southern gardens. When blooms fade, clip them from the plant. New panicles of flowers will form.

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Cleaners filter out different allergens to improve indoor air

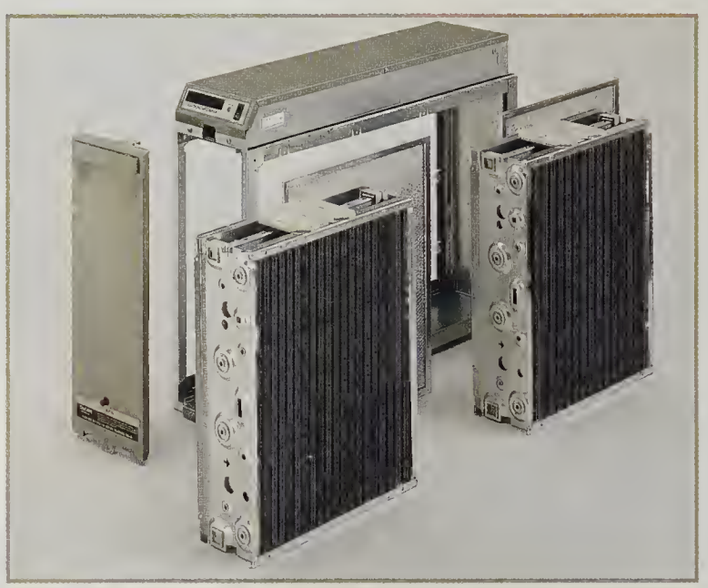
By James Dulley

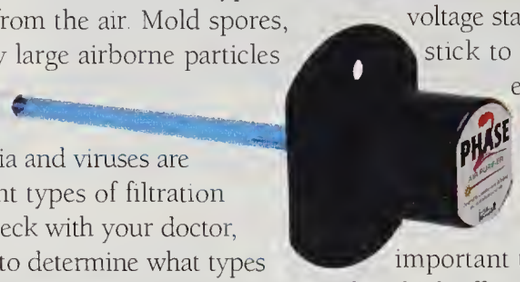
A combination of a room air cleaner and a central furnace/air-conditioner mounted air cleaner is a good defense against allergies. Poor indoor air quality, which is often more polluted than outdoor air, can also cause colds, other infections and aggravate health problems such as asthma.

Some room air cleaners, especially the best ones that use HEPA filter elements, have fairly powerful motors. Running several of these continuously will consume quite a bit of electricity. In contrast, most central air cleaners, even the electronic ones, use a relatively small amount of electricity or none at all.

A high-quality central air cleaner will also keep the heat exchanger and coil surfaces cleaner to maintain maximum heating and cooling efficiency. It is usually mounted on the return duct side so the air is cleaned before it enters the heat exchanger area of the furnace or heat pump. The effectiveness of air cleaners is often compared by their dust arrestance ratings.

The effectiveness of various air cleaners differs with the type of particle (allergen) you need to remove from the air. Mold spores, dust mite feces and pollen are relatively large airborne particles that are relatively easy for many filter materials to remove.





Above: Components of an electronic air cleaner
Below: Ultraviolet light air purifier

Tobacco and fireplace smoke, bacteria and viruses are very small particles that require different types of filtration methods. If you do not know already, check with your doctor, allergist or have your house air analyzed to determine what types of particles you need to clean from the air.

Another consideration is the resistance the air cleaner creates in the duct system. A thick, densely packed filter may be effective at catching almost all the airborne particles, but it can cause excessive airflow resistance. This higher resistance to air flow can make your furnace/air conditioner operate inefficiently and increase your utility bills. Compare the airflow resistance specifications on the package or instructions.

To avoid excessive airflow resistance and still have a super filtration, several designs of bypass HEPA air cleaners are available with their own blowers. HEPA filter media is often used in hospital operating rooms and is probably the most effective filtration method for both large and small particles in the air.

These models are attached to the main return duct. They draw air out of the duct, clean it and blow it back into the duct again. They have pretty powerful blowers, but they only operate when the furnace runs, not continuously like a room air cleaner.

If you have a very airtight house that gets stuffy, select a HEPA model that introduces filtered fresh outdoor air into your duct system. A lack of fresh air is often as much of a problem as dirty indoor air. In extremely hot or cold climates, choose a model with a heat recovery unit to save energy.

The most common types of in-line (uses furnace blower) air cleaners are electronic, self-charging electrostatic and pleated media. Electronic air cleaners use very little electricity. They create a high-voltage static charge that causes particles in the air to stick to its washable cells. They are particularly effective for removing the smallest particles from the air. Most models will have to be professionally installed and require duct-work modifications.

With an electronic air cleaner, it is important to regularly clean the filter cells to maintain their high efficiency and to minimize the production of ozone gas. The cells are generally small enough to fit into your dishwasher for easy cleaning.

Most washable self-charging electrostatic air cleaners slip into the existing filter slot in your furnace. The air blowing over the special combination of plastic materials creates a static charge. These are very effective for removing larger particles from the air. Each month, remove it from its slot and spray it off outdoors with a hose or rinse it off in the bathtub.

Pleated media filters are dense filters and are also very effective for removing the larger particle. Some thick ones require duct modifications for installation. To purify air in addition to cleaning it, install an ultraviolet (UV) light purifier in the return duct. The UV light kills virus, bacteria, mold spores, and other germs.

Write for (instantly download - *www.dulley.com*) Utility Bills Update No. 950 - buyer's guide of 11 central air cleaner manufacturers (35 models) listing filtration methods, dust arrest ratings, features, prices, and an allergen/design selector chart. Please include $3.00 and a business-size SASE. Send to James Dulley, Carolina Country, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244.

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Valentine Berries and Cream

8 squares (1 ounce each) semisweet chocolate
1 tablespoon shortening
2 packages (3 ounces each) cream cheese, softened
¼ cup butter or margarine, softened
1½ cups confectioners' sugar
⅓ cup baking cocoa
2 tablespoons milk
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2½ cups whipping cream, whipped, divided
1½ cups fresh strawberries, halved

Line a 9 inch heart shaped or square baking pan with foil; set aside. In a heavy saucepan over low heat, melt chocolate and shortening; stir until smooth. Pour into prepared pan, swirling to coat the bottom and 1½ inch up the sides, refrigerate for 1 minute, then swirl the chocolate to reinforce sides of heart or box. Refrigerate for 30 minutes or until firm. Using foil, lift from pan; remove foil and place chocolate heart on a serving plate. In a mixing bowl, beat the cream cheese and butter until smooth. Combine confectioners' sugar and cocoa; add to creamed mixture with milk and vanilla. Beat until smooth. Gently fold two-thirds of the whipped cream into cream cheese mixture. Spoon into heart. Insert star tip #32 into a pastry or plastic bag; fill with the remaining whipped cream. Pipe around the edge of heart. Garnish with strawberries.

Yield: 8-10 servings.

Frozen Cherry Salad

1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
1 carton (8 ounces) frozen whipped topping, thawed
1 can (21 ounces) cherry pie filling
2 cans (11 ounces each) mandarin oranges, drained
Maraschino cherries and orange wedges, optional

In a mixing bowl, combine the cream cheese and whipped topping. Stir in pie filling. Set aside ¼ cup oranges for garnish. Fold remaining oranges into cream cheese mixture. Transfer to a 9 inch x 5 inch x 3 inch loaf pan. Cover and freeze overnight. Remove15 minutes before cutting. Garnish with reserved mandarin oranges, and cherries and oranges if desired.

Yield: 12 servings.

Frozen Cherry Salad

Sweetheart Walnut Torte

Valentine Berries and Cream

For more Carolina Kitchen recipes, visit our Web site at www.carolinacountry.com

Sweetheart Walnut Torte

½ cup butter, softened
½ cup sugar
4 egg yolks
⅓ cup milk
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
⅛ teaspoon salt

MERINGUE:

4 egg whites
⅛ teaspoon cream of tartar
¾ cup sugar
1 cup chopped walnuts
Walnut halves

FILLING:

1 cup cold milk
1 package (3.9 ounces) instant chocolate pudding
1 cup whipping cream, whipped

Grease two 9-inch heart shaped pans. Line with waxed paper and grease the paper; set aside. In a mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar. Add egg yolks, milk and vanilla; mix well. Combine flour, baking powder and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture. Pour into prepared pans. In a mixing bowl, beat egg whites and cream of tartar until soft peaks form. Gradually add sugar; beat until stiff and glossy. Fold in chopped nuts. Spread evenly over batter, sealing edges to sides of pan. Arrange walnut halves over meringue in one pan. Bake at 300 degrees for 55 minutes or until golden brown. Cool for 10 minutes; remove to wire racks. Invert so meringue side is up; cool completely. In a mixing bowl, beat milk and pudding mix until thickened. Fold in whipped cream. Place plain cake, meringue side up, on serving plate. Spread with half of the filling; top with remaining cake. Frost sides with remaining filling.

Yield: 12-16 servings.

Recipes are by Taste of Home magazine. For a sample copy, send $2 to Taste of Home, Suite 4321, PO Box 990, Greendale WI 53129-0990. Visit the Web page at www.tasteofhome.com.

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